

Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-THREE • NUMBER SIX • JUNE 1987

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by Lawyers
& Judges**
Walter Berns

**Anthony Eden & the
Decline of Britain**
Owen Harries

Letter to a New Israeli
Ruth R. Wisse

Alzheimer's—A Story
Kelly Cherry

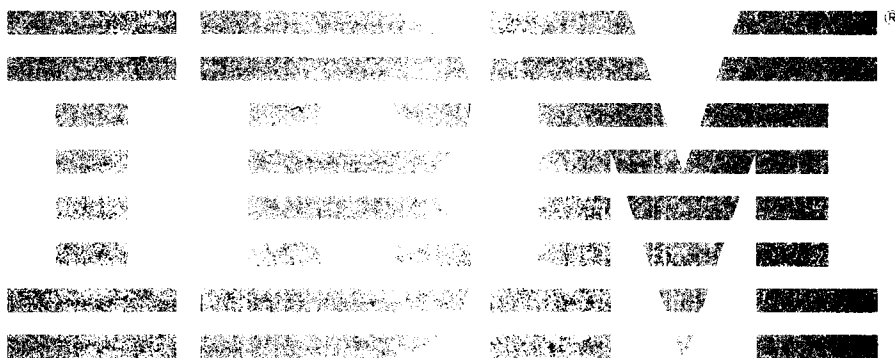
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Donald Kagan on Hugh Thomas
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**The Uses
of Exodus**
Fernanda
Eberstadt



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Letters from Readers

Preventing World War III

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Donald Kagan's "World War I, World War II, World War III" [March] is one of the best articles I have ever read in COMMENTARY. It combines broad historical analysis, geopolitical insight, and, perhaps most importantly, a profound sense of the tragedy of European politics in 1914 and 1938-39, a tragedy which may not have to recur on a vaster scale if Mr. Kagan's argument is heeded. If American students studied the history of international relations (which almost none do), this article ought to be required reading.

DAVID GRESS

Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Donald Kagan has written the most significant interpretation of recent history I have yet encountered. . . .

Mr. Kagan uses pedagogy in the finest sense to teach us the lessons of history and successfully relate them to our current situation. . . .

HAROLD PERKEL

Levittown, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have just finished reading Donald Kagan's excellent article, and found it doubly refreshing in light of a recent lecture I attended at the San Francisco chapter of the World Affairs Council, where a former National Security Council staffer in the Carter administration blithely put forth the most recent application of the "Sarajevo" analogy: that we have nothing to fear, and indeed should make every effort to accommodate the current efforts of Secretary General Gorbachev to reinvigorate the Soviet political and economic system. In other words, and within the context of Mr. Kagan's analysis, we should not simply accede to, but rather actively abet, the increasing might of the Soviets while at the same time deluding ourselves into thinking that we are somehow neutralizing or coopting them.

This policy entails an element of self-deception which, to my mind, exceeds even that of the previous accommodationists, and I note with some trepidation that this quixotic assessment of the Soviet

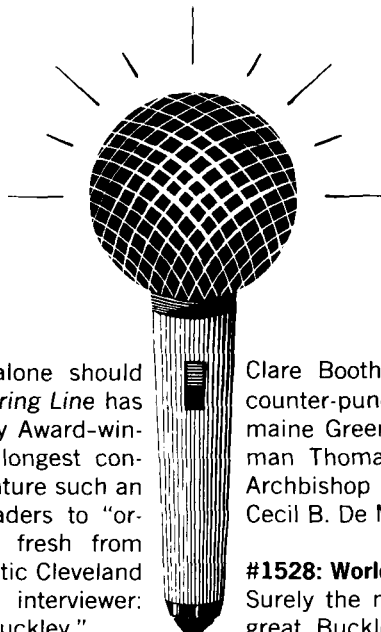
Union's purportedly "peaceful" intentions is shared by a significant number of influential figures in the West, more than a few of whom could be nominally characterized as hard-liners. The reason for this, I suspect, is another brilliant piece of ideological wordsmithing by Gorbachev, where a kind of rhetorical SDI shield has been fabricated from the symbolic standard-bearers of our own Western culture—peace, openness, democracy, economic competition, and incentives—so that an attempt to oppose these initiatives makes it appear that we in the West are being unreasonably belligerent and are somehow violating our own principles.

We have already seen how this policy has borne fruit for the Soviets with their adroit manipulation of the "peace" issue culminating in their Reykjavik strategy: a series of disingenuous nuclear-testing moratoriums and misleading disarmament proposals that have nonetheless put the Reagan administration on the defensive and precipitated some potentially disastrous responses.

Of course there are those, such as Mr. Kagan, who see through these ruses and alert us to them. . . . However, in order to carry the day, he is faced with the daunting prospect of having to prove his case before an increasingly debased and impressionable body of mass public opinion, . . . in which cynicism and naiveté reinforce each other in an increasingly downward spiral that makes it ever more difficult to sustain a coherent and far-ranging public policy. Indeed, the compelling and well-reasoned argument to fund the Nicaraguan resistance foundered amid these very tempestuous currents. In the wake of the scandal that these efforts generated, it seems that such untimely reverses are likely to continue, if not accelerate, in the near future.

There are no easy remedies to extricate us from this conundrum, and we may in fact be passing through that terminal crisis of the democratic order that Plato outlined in his *Republic*. However, if such a remedy is to be found, I agree again with Mr. Kagan . . . that we must place primary emphasis on the reformation of our domestic order if we are to rein-

'We interrupt this magazine to bring you a special announcement . . .'



. . . and we'll keep it brief—the facts alone should convince you to act. Wm. F. Buckley Jr.'s *Firing Line* has celebrated its 20th Anniversary. This Emmy Award-winning "talk show" is not only one of the longest continuous TV programs but the *only* one to feature such an amazing variety of guests, from world leaders to "ordinary" Americans like a young Marine fresh from Vietnam (he's now Colonel Oliver North). Critic Cleveland Amory (in *TV Guide*) once voted: "Best interviewer: William Buckley. Best interviewee: William Buckley."

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LEONARD BAKKER
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Donald Kagan's "World War I, World War II, World War III" is a fascinating and lucid study of the complex situation which confronts a democratic West face to face with the active power complex of the Soviet Union and its satellites.

The parallels he draws so carefully are of great interest, though he might have paired the current horror of nuclear weapons with the fear of aerial bombing which helped to paralyze the deterrent urge in the 1930's. In the case of nuclear weapons, this is made worse by the fact that the United States actually used atomic bombs at the end of the last war, incurring the charge of ruthlessness and inhumanity—not in the circumstances justified but still repeated regularly by the "peace" movement. The charge is given color and force by a dramatized and, as recent research suggests, an exaggerated version of the extent, if not the quality, of the carnage which resulted from that attack.

Another factor, seldom mentioned, is the curious folk view of Russians which still exists in Western Europe, and to some extent in the United States. This is a stereotypical image of a quasi-barbaric race of peace-loving simple people, possessed of great "soul," and throwing up a few formidable artists, scientists, and technicians; but, like all essentially savage peoples, not really dangerous unless provoked. It follows naturally that they will be no problem to us (so say the "peace" people) as long as no one—no one in the West, that is—does anything to make trouble.

This type of "thinking" is of course contemptible on the plane of high strategy and experts. But most of the votes in a democracy are not cast by experts, and the comforting quality of such stereotypes is ignored at our peril.

HERB GREER
Manchester, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Donald Kagan's article is a model of balance, thoroughness, and lucidity. . . . The popular epigram is that generals are always preparing for the next war by refighting the last one. Unfortunately, the moral

of the two world wars is that civilians are even more prone to that disastrous error. . . .

For hundreds of years, the moats of the Atlantic and Pacific have licensed Americans to treat Asiatic and European wars as occasions for the release of naive and prudish morality. Thus, in World Wars I and II, our country was not seriously threatened, and even if Germany had subdued all of Europe, and neutralized Russia, the New World could probably have remained secure. This worst possible case would not have been comfortable; still, compared with the other combatants in the two wars, we were not engaged in a life and death struggle. . . .

But we now exist in a world where we can be coerced by overwhelming force into accepting a subordinate and dependent international status. Or we can disastrously lose a war—as Israel can now lose; as Germany lost World War II; as the loyalists lost the Spanish Civil War; as the Confederacy lost the Civil War.

It is understandable that some of our leaders and intellectuals (and some of the public) have been slow to respond to the distressing lesson circumstances have transmitted. We have followed a different principle for over two hundred years, one that previously had been quite successful. . . .

One cannot help feeling, however, that the application of the theorem that our society is now in danger of absolute destruction would provoke us to conduct a more purposeful and focused foreign policy than has been the case over at least the past decade.

An important subtheme of Mr. Kagan's article is that, while people gradually draw correct lessons from complex events, such learning occurs very, very slowly. Let us all fervently hope that efforts such as his, and the powerful threats which now confront America, will help us accelerate the acquisition of our long-postponed understanding.

EDWARD A. WYNNE
University of Illinois
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Donald Kagan does not refer to one extremely important new factor that makes it even more difficult for "free societies [in the West] that enjoy the luxuries of economies designed for the pleasure and

happiness of their people" to deal firmly and rationally with the neo-Wilhelmine empire of the Soviets.

In the free societies of the West, particularly the English-speaking ones, there is now a large and influential minority of the intelligentsia and pseudo-intelligentsia who believe, or at least seem to believe, that both the U.S. and the Soviet Union are essentially the same: materialistic, militaristic, indifferent to the consequences of their actions, exploitative of the poor peoples and nations of the world, governed by elites who exploit the masses for their own gain. . . .

Pre-World War I Britain had its share of Germanophiles, intellectuals impressed by German science and culture, and members of the upper classes who indulged themselves in the luxury of being above stupid patriotism and chauvinism and all that. However, this group had nothing like the influence and respect enjoyed by the West's neutralists today. . . .

JOSEPH C. DOHERTY
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Donald Kagan expresses the opinion that if Britain had been willing to build a large army with ready reserves to land in France in response to a German invasion, this would have prevented the German attack on France in 1914. However, there would have been a very serious problem with transporting such a huge force *promptly* from the British Isles to France to meet a massive, rapidly-moving German invasion. The small British expeditionary force that was actually sent to France when Germany invaded Belgium was moved only with difficulty.

Britain would have had to acquire a large number of extra transport ships to move and supply a large British force quickly. The ships would have been prime targets for the German fleet and would have justified increased German building of warships. The Germans could not have permitted a large British force to land in France unmolested, as they did with the British expeditionary force, which they expected to be able to defeat in the field rather easily—as in fact they came very close to doing.

Moreover, a decision by the British to build a huge army for use against the Germans might well have provoked Germany into in-

vading France before such a British force could have been created, thus actually causing the war that Mr. Kagan proposes to have prevented.

Another possibility to consider is this: if a large British standing army had prevented a German attack on France, imperial Germany could have turned all its military efforts eastward and conquered Russia, as it did in 1917 after three years of war (though it had to give up its conquests in the East after its defeat in the West in 1918). An imperial Germany in solid control of the Baltic states, the Ukraine, and Western Russia could thus have been the result of Mr. Kagan's idea of a large British standing army.

JOSEPH FORBES
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Donald Kagan states with perfect clarity what might be called the ideology of intervention, but he rests his case on some thoroughly bad history.

To say that Russia was "deprived [of] Poland, Finland, the Baltic States, the Ukraine," etc. is to repeat—strangely, for a self-professed foe of the USSR—a canard that has been a central pillar of Soviet paranoid whining since 1919. Does Mr. Kagan imagine that there is some inherent right of the rulers of Moscow to run these lands? Were czarist military conquests somehow sacred in a way that the Kaiser's were not? To illustrate the probable consequences of German victory in the West by reference to the Brest-Litovsk settlements is to compare apples with kumquats. Did not the historical nations in the above list have some right to self-determination, even if their freedom from the Muscovites was at the cost of domination by the Germans? Or should these lands have been returned to Russian domination?

Worse than Mr. Kagan's erasure of East European national realities is his practice of that half-witted brother of "what-if" history, "would-have" history. With keen geopolitical and strategic insight, he has found two occasions when the British and French could have ensured European peace forever and ever. If the British in, say, 1900 had begun conscription along continental lines, "a standing army and a large trained reserve" would have "made . . . any conceivable

German plan of war obviously absurd and certain to fail." But strategy being the use of circumstance, what was then to prevent the Kaiser's Germany from turning full-force to the East (perhaps not invading Belgium at all), obliterating the czar, and living high on McKinder's "heartland"? While this is speculation, is it "obviously absurd"? Had Mr. Kagan been around in 1914, I think he would have found that checkmating the Kaiser was no easy thing.

Again, in 1936, the Western democracies flubbed it, according to Mr. Kagan. When Hitler moved into the Rhineland, they should have struck his paltry force, thereby bursting the bubble of German resurgence, and World War II would not have happened, Europe would have reverted to its usual placidity, and destroying the Fuehrer would have proved as easy as deterring the Kaiser. . . .

Turning from past to present, Mr. Kagan makes equally questionable points. Whatever he may mean by "the European forces of the Soviet Union," it is simply not true that these "vastly outnumber" NATO. In manpower, the Warsaw Pact has only a slight edge, while in the categories of tanks and aircraft, the glamor weapons of modern war, their 2.5-3:1 advantage is not, in reality, enough to ensure victory for an attacker. Nor is it clear why Mr. Kagan should question the "quality of [U.S.] personnel and its potential effectiveness" while turning a blind eye to the well-documented shortcomings of Soviet and other Warsaw Pact forces. Does he imagine enthusiastic, effective Russians (much less Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians) overrunning Western Europe? Actually, this is *precisely* what he appears to fear, but such an event could happen only if Gorbachev's soldiers were to possess something akin to the tactical and operational talent of the Kaiser's and the Fuehrer's forces. Despite Mr. Kagan's alarmism, there is no evidence that they do.

In sum, Mr. Kagan has prescribed for the future on the basis of a poor understanding of the past. . . .

ED FRANK

Memphis, Tennessee

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The employment of massive mobilization in the summer of 1914 by the warring powers, coupled with the use of the extensive and

efficient European rail system, resulted in a mechanism that expanded a regional dispute into a general European war of unprecedented and unimaginable dimension—the generals were in a hurry and the trains ran on time.

To expand Donald Kagan's series of analogies: do not the nuclear strategies of the United States and the Soviet Union constitute a similar mechanism that, once put in motion, would lead to catastrophe?

LAWRENCE H. BLUM
Beaumont, Texas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Donald Kagan's "World War I, World War II, World War III" is a piece of considerable nostalgia. It returns the affairs of nations to a time when the devastation of war, horrible as it was, nonetheless did not obliterate the possibility of life itself. Nuclear weapons enter the article, to be sure, yet their irrefutable menace for all life is a fact that has no place in a discussion of the will and strategy of ministers busily facing one another down. It is as if Mr. Kagan wrote before the accident at Chernobyl and the enormous threat that even so relatively limited a nuclear accident occasioned.

There is more. Although Mr. Kagan cites the costs of armaments, he does not consider, except for the British investment in airplanes in the 20's and the German investment in armored ships at the turn of the century, just how allocations affect a nation's preparedness. Yet among American critics the cry continues that much of our outlay does not support an army capable of fighting an enemy, but in fact purchases complex, very often unworkable, and ineffective weapons. The threat of the Soviets remains, but nowadays it is not quite so salient as the threat of wars in the Third World, wars against terrorists, and wars against drug pushers. It is fatuous to say that these threats are minor. Yet our divisions and patrols cannot cope with any of these current forms of aggression.

One ought to recognize, as well, that although the similarities between Germany of the earlier 20th century and the USSR are convincing, the differences are stark enough, too. Hitler helped Franco succeed in four years; the Soviets have yet to prevail after seven years in Afghanistan. The Germans apparently could count on enormous concentrations of energy

and skill to create their military machine; the Soviets admit to their own shoddiness (or are we to discount everything they say?). . . .

I read the article because it includes in its title the arresting phrase "World War III." Mr. Kagan's thesis is that a repetition of the earlier world wars is apparently due to unfold unless we learn from past error. But one can reasonably argue, aware of the willfulness attending the earlier wars, that the lesson which emerges is that this time a madman would create the worldwide holocaust Hitler craved. . . . But we could not expect to fight a war with nuclear weapons and want to rejoice after the hostilities—there is no way to fight such a war and no convincing way to prepare for it.

EUGENE GREEN

Brookline, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Donald Kagan claims that "Wilhelmine Germany presents a far closer and more useful analogy" to the Soviet Union than Hitler's Germany does. As opposed to Hitler's Germany, pre-World War I Germany was a highly civilized country with the same sociopolitical structure as the rest of Europe. But Hitler's Germany was a system that challenged the very basis of Western civilization, and the same applies to the Soviet Union. Mr. Kagan even manages to forget the Hitler-Stalin pact, an understanding that led to World War II, for which the Soviet Union must share equal responsibility with Nazi Germany. In evaluating the role of the Soviet Union, Mr. Kagan not only disregards this pact but also the very essence of Marxism.

Mr. Kagan maintains that the "Soviet Union was committed from the first to a program of world revolution and the destruction of the current world order, but its internal weakness forced it to put such hopes and a forward policy aside. . . ."

It is generally known that according to Marxism world revolution must occur with the necessity of a natural historic force and will be achieved through the proletariat of the developed industrial nations. Lenin's "contribution" to this thesis was that it is possible to achieve such revolutionary change even without a developed working class, if a party of professional revolutionaries—the Bolshevik party—acts as the

advance guard of the proletariat. It was never assumed that the Russian Revolution would foster a world revolution. In the late 20's, Stalin and his followers recognized that "capitalism was stabilized" and that Marx's analysis was mistaken. Stalin then formulated the thesis of "socialism in one country" and the Third International was formed to mobilize all revolutionary forces to protect the Soviet Union. Thus any attempt to expand . . . could be achieved only by military occupation and by imposing the Soviet regime upon other nations. Thus Soviet imperialism was established and the imperative of imperialist expansion superseded any ideological differences with other nations. The result was the Stalin-Hitler pact.

Mr. Kagan's statement is actually an apology for Soviet imperialist policy and a grave underestimation of the Soviet danger. Also misleading is his assumption that the Soviet world view is based on the concept of a "struggle for dominance between the forces of light—socialism-Communism—and the forces of darkness—capitalism." In fact, relations between the Communist Soviet Union and Communist China and Yugoslavia are more antagonistic than those between the Communist Soviet Union and the capitalist United States. . . .

Mr. Kagan finally declares that "containment sheltered by deterrence . . . can work." Containment means that we recognize the essence of the Soviet Stalinist imperialist policy, and concede to the Soviets the right to force their rule upon over 100 million people in the heart of Europe and reduce them to colonies. Containment also means accepting Soviet colonies all over the world which have been turned into military beachheads, including some in the backyard of the United States like Cuba and Nicaragua. Though Mr. Kagan is no doubt right about the importance of deterrence, this is not the whole lesson to be learned.

The real lesson is that World War II was the result of a moral decline of the European democracies. Their foreign policy, based on realpolitik and devoid of any moral principles, allowed Hitler's expansionist policy. In the Atlantic Charter, however, both Roosevelt and Churchill emphasized the importance of a policy based on the principle of human rights and the self-determination of nations. But

both statesmen permitted the violation of these principles by the Soviet Union. They did not insist that Stalin renounce his pact with Hitler, including his territorial expansion. At the time, however, a mere diplomatic note would have been sufficient to achieve such a result.

The Soviet Union is still following the Stalinist foreign policy that brought so much tragedy upon the nations of Europe and also the world at large. Without abandoning Stalinism in the realm of foreign policy, the Soviet Union is unable to eliminate it from its internal policy, particularly insofar as the economy is concerned. This means that we have to recognize that the cause of the present tension is that the principles of the Atlantic Charter—embodied also in the United Nations Charter—have been violated. Thus the first step toward de-Stalinization would be for Gorbachev himself to renounce the Stalin-Hitler pact and the foreign policy based on this pact that continued even after the defeat of Hitler. Only then would an avenue for limited reforms be opened up and only then could the first step toward real peace and freedom be taken.

EUGEN LOEBL

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

How odd it is nowadays to read a discussion of a contemporary issue wherein the importance of historical perspective is recognized. Hence it was particularly rewarding to read Donald Kagan's historically-grounded essay. Munich of 1938 and Sarajevo of 1914 are indeed illuminating and arresting paradigms through which to view the world today.

But no one is errorless, not even Mr. Kagan. Notwithstanding his otherwise fine article, he makes an error, a common one at that: he suggests that an all-volunteer army is more expensive than a conscripted one. This is wrong. Whether a society has an all-volunteer army or a conscripted one, the real costs are the same. What is different, though, is who bears the costs. With the former, the full cost is borne by the taxpayers; with the latter, part of the cost is transferred from the taxpayers to the draftees.

How is this so? Well, with conscription, draftees are forced to accept pay (measured both monetarily

ly and in kind) which is lower than the alternatives available to them in the non-military sector; otherwise they would not have to be forced into military service. And it is this difference—that is, the difference between what a draftee would be paid in the non-military sector and what he or she gets paid in the military—that is transferred to and borne by the draftees.

Conscription, then, is not really cheaper than an all-volunteer army. It just creates the illusion that it is cheaper.

PAUL D'ANDREA

Oak Lawn, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I enjoyed reading Donald Kagan's article, "World War I, World War II, World War III," although I disagree with a number of his arguments. I would like to point out, however, that my own article, "Détente and Deterrence: Anglo-German Relations, 1911-1914," is cited incorrectly by Mr. Kagan. It appeared in the Fall 1986 issue of *International Security*, but Mr. Kagan lists the title of the journal as *International Relations*.

SEAN M. LYNN-JONES

Center for Science and
International Affairs
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

DONALD KAGAN writes:

I agree with Joseph C. Doherty that the views of too many American and other Western intellectuals present a serious barrier to our own country's ability to see the world clearly and to devise and carry out effective plans for keeping the peace and protecting our freedom. Though Britain before 1914 had similar problems, opinion was more divided. There were still a good number of educated and thoughtful Britons who felt comfortable in being both patriots and realists. Today's intellectuals, on the other hand, unable or unwilling to see the unmistakable differences between the liberal democracies of the West and the Communist tyranny of the Soviet Union, seem closer to those of the 1930's who refused to see the wickedness of the dictators and the dangers they presented. My favorite example of such foolish and willful blindness is contained in the following lines from W.H. Auden's poem, "September 1, 1939," in which he explains Hitler's attack on Poland as follows:

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offense
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

Only a left-wing intellectual could

believe, as late as September 1939, that Hitler's behavior was merely an understandable response to evil done Germany by the Versailles Treaty, just as only such intellectuals today can hold to the absurd belief in the moral equivalence of the United States and the Soviet Union.

Joseph Forbes suggests that the formation of a large British army before 1914 might have had dire consequences. The building of

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ships to carry that army to the continent might have provided Germany with an excuse for building its own navy, for example. But the Germans were already building battleships as fast as they could; things could not have gone worse in that respect. Such an army, he also says, might have provoked Germany to attack even earlier than it did. My study of Wilhelmine Germany convinces me that such a possibility would have been more than remote. I believe, instead, that a large British army would have served as an effective deterrent to war. Finally he suggests that deterrence in the West would have been a bad thing because it would have forced a successful attack eastward against Russia. He ignores the French treaty with Russia that required the French to move against Germany from the West when its Eastern ally was attacked. The Germans took the Franco-Russian treaty and the strategic problem it presented so seriously that they adopted the Schlieffen Plan precisely to meet it, believing that an invasion of Russia with an undefeated France in their rear would mean national suicide. By 1907 commitments to France and Russia would have compelled the British to become involved, at least to the extent of a naval blockade. The result would surely have been a much quicker and more disastrous defeat for Germany. A sufficient British army, I continue to believe, would have saved an extraordinary amount of misery.

Ed Frank's suggestion that my account of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk implies approval of Russia's claims to the lost territory is bizarre. I made no judgment of who, if anyone, had a right to the transferred areas, merely listing what was transferred. The point was to show that German war aims were not compatible with European security or British interests. To his suggestion that a Germany checked in the West in 1914 might have won an easy victory in the East I offer the answer I gave Joseph Forbes. Mr. Frank accuses me of an "ideology of intervention," but I advocate no ideology, only a policy of deterrence. It is true that in 1936 deterrence required intervention. Only Mr. Frank, so far as I know, doubts that it would have been easily successful at that time. Hitler, as I pointed out, had no such doubt. However that might be, does Mr. Frank think the al-

ternative he appears to favor and the one that was chosen, the failure to intervene that led to World War II, was a better course? As to the current military balance in Europe, I believe that no one doubts the numerical superiority of Soviet and satellite forces. The debate is about the value of their quantitative advantage over the alleged Western superiority in quality. My own study of the evidence leaves me skeptical that anyone knows the answer, but I remember how badly Hitler underestimated the ultimate fighting ability of Soviet military forces in 1941. In spite of their very real shortcomings, they somehow stumbled into Berlin in 1945. We have no grounds for smugness in that regard.

Lawrence H. Blum seems to me to make the mistakes that are most common these days in analyses of international relations and conflicts: excessive generalization, a failure to distinguish disturbers of the peace from those disturbed, and a glib blaming of impersonal systems rather than the people who create them and use them in pursuit of their aims. In my judgment neither railroads nor even generals caused the Great War of 1914 but a regime that sought unacceptable gains and ran excessive risks to get them, as well as opponents who reacted with an inadequate deterrent. Modern strategies and systems, nuclear and conventional alike, are no more independent and inherently causal than earlier ones. Dangers are most likely to arise from unacceptable goals on one side and an inadequate effort of deterrence on the other.

I am inclined to take as grim a view of nuclear war as does Eugene Green. There may well be no satisfactory way to fight such a war or even to prepare for it. It is, however, both possible and absolutely necessary to prevent it, and I see no way to do so that excludes adequate military force for deterrent purposes. Deterrence is more complex and expensive today than ever before, but because of the terrible character of nuclear war it is more necessary. For the same reason a serious and continuing commitment to deterrence may turn out to be more successful than in the past.

It would take an article at least as long as the one I wrote to respond adequately to the issues raised in Eugen Loeb's letter. I certainly do not apologize for Soviet imperialism; I recognize and

deplore it. Nor do I think that I underestimate its dangers, but I assess its nature somewhat differently from the way he does. One of his proposed solutions seems to be a rejection of containment in favor, I presume, of some sort of attack on the Soviet Union, a recipe for disaster. The other proposal appears to be a call for a spiritual conversion not only in the West but within the Soviet Union and the hearts of its leaders. I am not attracted by the first and will not live long enough to see the second.

I am glad that Paul D'Andrea liked my article, but sorry that he chose to play with words to cloud the issue. National defense is the responsibility of the federal government alone, not of individuals. The cost and inconvenience to them is part of the normal responsibility of a citizen as it has universally been understood until quite recently. To the extent that money measures our military capacity, only the cost to the government is relevant.

I apologize to Sean M. Lynn-Jones for my erroneous citation of his article.

Finally, my warm thanks for their thoughtful and interesting letters and for their kind words to David Gress, Harold Perkel, Leonard Bakker, Herb Greer, and Edward A. Wynne.

History & the Historians

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Schlesinger Thesis" [March], Kenneth S. Lynn raises the interesting question of why the field of 20th-century American political history "has declined to the point where senior-faculty positions . . . have gone unfilled at Harvard, Johns Hopkins, and other institutions, for want of candidates who have proved themselves scholars. How, and when, and why, did the discipline fall into such woeful difficulty?" Mr. Lynn gives an ideological answer to his own question, but he is so fixated on one ideology that he remains blind to another.

Mr. Lynn cites the careers not only of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. but of John Morton Blum, Frank Freidel, and William Leuchtenburg in a strained effort to explain why eminent scholars in the field failed to recruit a critical mass of graduate students to succeed them. "And the most likely reason for their pedagogical failure was the

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political bias that drastically narrowed their conceptions of what reform was and kept them from seeing that in modern America virtually every President has been a reformer." The idea that only liberal Presidents had a "rendezvous with destiny" was "good theater," Mr. Lynn suggests, "but as a means of cutting into and understanding American history, it was an instrument of limited usefulness, and most of the intellectually sophisticated graduate students—that saving remnant—avoided having it thrust upon them."

The curious thing about this passage is that it applies with equal force to the author himself and his own field of American intellectual history. Mr. Lynn, after all, is not exactly the model scholar who has established an enduring school of thought and produced a brilliant galaxy of graduate students to sustain the field. Surely he knows that intellectual history, along with political history, was rejected by the 60's generation as an elitist apology for the status quo. He would have readers believe that the "sophisticated graduate students" of that era rejected "reform" because they had finally awakened to the deceptions of liberal historiography and the snares of the welfare state. But many young New Left graduate students chose not to study either political or intellectual history because they were searching for a way not to change the "system" but to overthrow it. Their rendezvous was not with reform but revolution.

Anyone who would understand what has happened to the study of American history solely by reading Mr. Lynn's article would miss the important point that the field has come to be dominated by Marxists and feminists. Evidence? Three elections to the presidency of the Organization of American Historians, countless panels on such topics at the annual OAH conventions, and the enormous number of young historians who have been influenced by the late Herbert Gutman, who did much to reshape the field of American labor history and had students doing history "from the bottom up" in search of "class consciousness." Other academic fields have also come to be dominated by radicalism, as indicated in the recent COMMENTARY article on "The Tenured Left" by Stephen H. Balch and Herbert I. London [October 1986].

What killed liberal historiography, whether political, intellectual, or diplomatic, was Marxism, a term not even mentioned in Mr. Lynn's article. I suppose when a neoconservative wants to see his ideological foe finished off, it hardly matters who does the job. Thus Mr. Lynn scarcely bothers to inform COMMENTARY readers that two excellent chapters in Schlesinger's book critically take on cold-war revisionist historiography. Had Mr. Lynn discussed these learned chapters, honesty would have compelled him to concede that Schlesinger has fallen into disfavor among those "intellectually sophisticated graduate students" because he has defended the West in the cold war and devastated all left-wing explanations of its origins.

It is strange that Mr. Lynn fails to mention the late Richard Hofstadter, a 20th-century political historian who was also repudiated by the 60's generation. A few years before his death he had been nominated to the presidency of the Organization of American Historians. I recall watching in sadness and anger as graduate students at the OAH convention in Los Angeles in 1971 organized to deny him the honor. "That saving remnant" indeed!

Mr. Lynn is delighted to describe liberal historiography as discredited, but he does not want to admit to COMMENTARY readers that its current precarious status is the work of younger radical scholars who are now entrenched in academia. In his war against liberalism he is a consistent Leninist: no enemies on the Left.

JOHN PATRICK DIGGINS
University of California
Irvine, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Kenneth S. Lynn has told his readers nothing that historians haven't known for decades: that some of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s books were written as celebrations and should be read cautiously with that in mind. Instead, Mr. Lynn has used the occasion of Schlesinger's *The Cycles of American History* as yet another opportunity to wield his cooking spoon and spank those in the intellectual community who have the audacity to utter the slightest criticism of American culture. Will his tiring enthusiasm for enforcing a unanimous affirmation of our culture never flag? And if he ever succeeds

in his project, will any of us truly be proud of a community of intellectual critics reduced to cheerleading?

The answer to Mr. Lynn's question of why there aren't good 20th-century political historians any longer is not, as he suggests, that Schlesinger and others have been too liberal, too critical of America, or too engaged in politics. Rather, it has been figures like Mr. Lynn who have driven the best minds of the past two decades into the social sciences rather than history. In the social sciences, those who have a curiosity about contemporary America can more easily pursue their investigations—and weave together an affirmation with dissent—without being subject to the constant accusations of Mr. Lynn and his fellow conservative guardians of American civilization. With Mr. Lynn guarding the gate, checking the affirmation quotient of each who enters, who with a genuine and independent curiosity about the recent past would choose to work in the field of 20th-century history? . . .

NEIL JUMONVILLE
Cambridge, Massachusetts

KENNETH S. LYNN writes:

John Patrick Diggins believes that the process of intellectual decline described in "The Schlesinger Thesis" originated in the 60's. But on the basis of personal memory I am convinced that the calamity began somewhat earlier, in the late 40's and the 50's, and I focused my argument accordingly. "The academicians who came to dominate 20th-century American political history in the decade and a half after World War II" wrote some useful books, I said, yet they "did not have much success with the best graduate students of the period." In a time of academic expansionism, when a "saving remnant" of gifted graduate students chose to specialize in other aspects of American history, "only a scattering of . . . the young people with genuine historical interests" was more than briefly drawn to the specialty of Professors Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., John Morton Blum, Frank Freidel, *et al.* Thus, Mr. Diggins's catalogue of the horrors of the 60's that I did not discuss is irrelevant, and so is his criticism that I did not talk about intellectual history, diplomatic history, and labor history. For my more modest purpose was to ana-

lyze the decline and fall of one particular discipline, 20th-century American political history, in the hope that through circumscription I could achieve solidity.

Mr. Diggins's climactic statement that my failure to mention the word Marxism, or deal with the depredations of the feminist historians, is the result of my not wanting to criticize the radical scholars who are now entrenched in academia is simply wild. As I wrote four years ago in the preface to a collection of my essays, the political turbulence of the 60's inspired "a whole new scholarship about American civilization [which] incorporated a host of dubious theories, old and new."

Mr. Diggins thinks of me as a Leninist who wants no enemies on the Left; Neil Jumonville, by contrast, characterizes me as a cheerleader who hates "the slightest criticism of American culture." It is not Schlesinger and company, he goes on to say, who are responsible for the current state of 20th-century American political history; rather, it is "figures like Mr. Lynn." "With Mr. Lynn guarding the gate . . .," he concludes, "who with a genuine and independent curiosity about

the recent past would choose to work in the field of 20th-century history?" Somehow, Mr. Jumonville has got the idea that I am a political historian. Alas, that assumption is almost as wide of the mark as his belief that I seek to stifle the intellectual curiosity of graduate students about tragic problems in the American past.

Israel's Intellectuals

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I very much enjoyed Edward Rothstein's article, "Israel's Alienated Intellectuals" [February]. I hope that it will help put into proper perspective the well-reported jeremiads, criticisms, and moral lamentations of some of my fellow Israelis. I think it might be helpful to realize that many Israeli intellectuals share certain habits of mind with intellectuals in the U.S. and elsewhere.

The first is a preference for maintaining an aloof moral superiority that seeks solutions to complex world problems through the adoption of self-righteous attitudes rather than through dealing in the messy tools of cost-benefit comparisons, realpolitik, and incremental-



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ism. It makes many Western intellectuals feel pure to advocate divestment from South Africa, support for Nicaragua, etc., just as it makes many Israeli intellectuals feel righteous to advocate symmetry for Palestinian and Israeli aspirations, to propose "dialogue" with the PLO, and to support the abandonment of force in all situations where Israel's existence is not in immediate danger. Both sets of intellectuals have difficulty supporting military spending, especially when it could have an alternative use in social programs. Both would solve problems without force, by "understanding" the other side, by conceding to the other side things that would supposedly reduce its unreasonable demands. Both groups blame external hostility toward their country on the plethora of injustices, inequalities, and shortcomings that prevail there.

A second characteristic of both groups is a fascination with government programs and a naive belief in the unlimited ability of government to solve social problems. This is combined with a haughty disregard for the less educated, who are seen as being eternally dependent on bureaucracy to guide their lives. In America this attitude has been somewhat restrained by constitutional limits and by the non-intellectuals' mistrust of big government. But in Israel the growth of bureaucracy has been less restricted and the result is the economic dinosaur of Israeli socialism.

Curiously, intellectuals often call for *more* spending and taxes, and have little if any faith in markets. Economic growth seems to be among the lowest on their list of priorities, perhaps because intellectuals generally have already "gotten theirs." Intellectuals often think that the problem is that the wrong people are bureaucrats and politicians, and not that bureaucracy and political elites exercise too much power in the name of doing good.

Both sets of intellectuals tend to share a romantic nostalgia for the simple life, for rural traditionalism, for "small is beautiful." In Israel, this is reflected to some extent in lingering nostalgia for kibbutz communalism among urban intellectuals. In both societies, many intellectuals regard religion and traditional personal morality and values as medieval vestiges to be tolerated at best with tongue in cheek. The vast majority of their

fellow non-intellectuals do not agree. These poor souls also do not like to be socially engineered, or denied material comfort in the name of someone else's lofty ideals.

Finally, there is a general detachment by intellectuals in both countries from ugly realities. Recently, a well-known Israeli writer expressed astonishment that after meeting with several pro-PLO Arab writers, none would agree to denounce PLO terrorism or advocate PLO recognition of Israel's right to exist, even after *he* had called for Palestinian self-determination and denounced Israeli policies. Few non-intellectuals showed any surprise.

STEVEN E. PLAUT

Haifa, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Rothstein's "Israel's Alienated Intellectuals" is both timely and incisive. . . . A key and true observation he makes is that the members of the group he analyzes consider Israel "theirs." This group also includes persons who would not pass a strict "intellectual" test, but Mr. Rothstein's later reference to the "old boy" network indicates that he is aware of the existence of such a wider group. . . .

An important point brought out by Mr. Rothstein is the secular nature of the major segments of Labor Zionism. . . . The difficulty . . . is how to reconcile secularism with the concept of *moledet*, which Mr. Rothstein defines as "passionate attachment to the land of Israel." This has reached almost absurd dimensions with Amos Oz: here is a very successful writer in modern Hebrew, the revival of which was the crowning achievement of modern Jewish nationalism, and a *sabra* to boot, who is still not sure of the Jews' national right to Israel. When asked about the subject, he reportedly made an analogy with a life-raft held on to by both a Jew and an Arab. Since it could sustain only one of them, the Jew had priority because the Arab had a choice of other rafts but not the Jew. Nothing about historical rights, the unparalleled attachment to the land, . . . or, of course, the centrality of *Eretz Yisrael* in the Jewish religion. . . .

This type of "utilitarian" approach to one's homeland is rather widespread among those brought up in the socialist tradition, which means the large majority of office-

holders in the Israeli bureaucracy and military. Thus, when the future of the Sinai was discussed in peace negotiations, Sadat and the Egyptians unabashedly claimed that every square inch of the Sinai was "sacred Egyptian soil." The Israelis, on the other hand, instead of challenging this preposterous claim, explained how the Sinai was suitable for tank warfare and early-warning systems, etc. . . .

Such an approach takes for granted, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that everyone agrees that Israel and its survival are such important and universal ideals that the surrounding countries will allow some of their allegedly "sacred soil" to remain under Israeli control. As long as the illusion of a pure socialist Israel continued, the group under discussion held on to this notion (although the Arabs never did). But as their realization has increased that Israel is not going to become the socialist utopia they wanted, they behave as if Israel does not deserve to be defended at all. . . .

Toward the end of his article Mr. Rothstein observes that not only Labor but the Likud also live mostly in the past. . . . One could say about both groups that their historical role in establishing and consolidating Israel has been completed. Their ideological hangups and quarrels are irrelevant now. In fact, many of them were always irrelevant. They should be content to have had the privilege of helping shape Jewish history at its crucial time of rejuvenation, and should now either adjust to the new reality or make way for those willing and able to do so. . . .

E.B. AYAL

University of Illinois
Chicago, Illinois

Jorge Luis Borges

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Joseph Epstein, "Señor Borges's Portico" [April], is a legitimate personal comment on the Argentine writer's life and work. It is clear that Mr. Epstein is not enchanted by the art and intellectual talent of Jorge Luis Borges, but he humbly recognizes in him "one of the most charming ornaments of the literature of our century."

I would like, nevertheless, to call attention to certain facts. During his lifetime (1899-1986), Borges was married twice, not once: first, un-



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der Argentine law, to Elsa Astete Millán in 1967; and for the second time, under Uruguayan law since Argentina does not recognize divorce, to his lifelong companion and student, María Kodama, a few months before his death.

Also, although Mr. Epstein refers to and quotes from Emir Rodríguez Monegal in his article, it seems that he does not yet know about Monegal's death, in November 1985. Monegal was professor of contemporary Latin American literature at Yale and a close friend of Borges (his name appears in at least one of the Argentine writer's short stories). He was also the author of a highly regarded biography of Borges.

But my intention here is mainly to develop one of Mr. Epstein's points: as mentioned in the article, Borges was accused in 1934 by a fascist magazine in Argentina of being Jewish. He then proclaimed in a published reply (*Megáfono*, April 1934) his desire to belong to the people of Israel, although he had searched for a Jewish ancestor and was unable to locate one. But Borges's identification with the Jewish heritage does not stop here: in 1919, in Spain, he befriended Rafael Cansinos-Asséns, an Andalusian Jew who one year later published two books, *Las bellezas del Talmud* and *España y los judíos españoles* (both appeared in 1920). Cansinos-Asséns was the founder of Ultraism (a movement that tried to introduce the European avant-garde, i.e., the cultural revolutions made by Dadaism, Cubism, Surrealism, and Expressionism, into Spain) and Borges always recognized him as one of his own tutors. One should also mention, among his other Jewish friends, Gershom Scholem, whom Borges names in his poem "*El Golem*."

Jewish references and symbols appear in many of Borges's stories: "The Secret Miracle," for example, is a tribute to Kafka; "Death and the Compass" is a detective story where the three victims are hasidic Jews and the solution to the plot comes from Spinoza's philosophy. Ideas on the kabbalah and mystical union appear in "The Approach to al-Mu'tasim," and an explicit Jewish theodicy can be found in "Emma Zunz."

No doubt, whenever Borge portrayed Jewish characters in his fiction, they were always heroes of the supernatural, champions on a theological and philosophical scale.

He never portrayed common people worried about mundane problems. He loved the ideal image of the Jew: the cosmopolitan, the philosopher, the kabbalist, the polyglot, but never the simple man.

ILAN STAVANS

Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am surprised that Joseph Epstein, in his excellent article on Jorge Luis Borges, did not mention the fact that Borges is probably the best writer in this century not to have received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

The Nobel Prize committee has made itself look ridiculous more often than not in recent decades, awarding the prize to trivial writers, even nonentities, apparently for reasons more political than literary. This was quite evident on the three occasions in the last twenty years when it came to be Latin America's "turn" to have a Nobel. Instead of the politically conservative Borges, the committee chose Miguel Angel Asturias, Pablo Neruda, and Gabriel García Márquez—all of whom are of the far Left and, of course, virulently anti-American. Compared to Borges, they are second-raters. If Borges had been a committed man of the Left, he would have received the Nobel long ago.

J. EDGAR WILLIAMS

Carrboro, North Carolina

JOSEPH EPSTEIN writes:

I wish to thank Ilan Stavans for pointing out that Borges was married in the last months of his life and that Emir Rodríguez Monegal died in 1985. I was ignorant of both facts when I wrote my essay.

Conservative Judaism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

We applaud COMMENTARY for its timeliness in publishing "The Judaism Born in America" [December 1986], which spotlighted the centennial year of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. We also commend Howard Singer for the content of this article in which he concisely and critically assesses the history of the Conservative movement in America.

Of the omnipresent "shadow" to which he refers, the tension born of the need for an unequivocal

Conservative dogma, it is indeed ironic that the flexibility which has been the strength of Conservative Judaism in its formative stages and which made possible the simultaneous embrace of both tradition and change, should now be perceived by some observers as antithetical to the health of the movement.

Jewish tradition has never been monolithic in nature and it is unlikely that Conservative Judaism can be forced into a single mold. One of our greatest living leaders, Dr. Robert Gordis, has stated that "It is we, standing at the center, who are called upon to combine disparate goals which seem to others to be contradictory and mutually exclusive. We must constantly call attention to the fact that these varied elements are all legitimate and, therefore, inherently compatible!"

In keeping with Mr. Singer's critique, Dr. Gordis acknowledges that "there are among us, as there should be and I hope always will be, varying interpretations of our tradition and divergences of view with regard to the procedures to be adopted in dealing with the problems of life."

As to Mr. Singer's statement that the level of observance among our constituents has shown "an unrelenting decline," regrettably we have come to the same conclusion. Accordingly, the United Synagogue of America, the lay arm of the Conservative movement, has formed a Committee on Commitment and Observance, co-chaired by a prominent rabbi, Joel Rembaum of Los Angeles, California, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nebraska, the Honorable Norman Krivosha. Judge Krivosha is a traditional Conservative Jew who embodies the promise of the future and a leading jurist whose Jewish convictions motivate him to serve simultaneously as an international vice president of our organization.

Although times and definitions may change, we believe that our race is not yet run. There remains an important place in today's world for the Conservative brand of Judaism, whose goal Mr. Singer aptly describes as "to conserve the tradition by being open to modernity."

[RABBI] BENJAMIN Z. KREITMAN
Executive Vice President

FRANKLIN D. KREUTZER
International President

United Synagogue of America
New York City

HOWARD SINGER writes:

I am pleased that Rabbi Kreitman and Franklin D. Kreutzer graciously acknowledge the validity of my analysis. However, they believe the movement's present difficulties rest upon the widespread perception of its ideological weakness and therefore seek to defend its ideological stance. But in fact ideology is far less important than religious leaders think.

Religious movements have grown and prospered despite confused, contradictory, narrow, and sometimes even repellent ideologies, for religious loyalty is essentially an emotional response. The real problem is that the Conservative laity (which sets the tone for the movement) is now so completely secularized that it has little capacity for, or even curiosity about, any variety of religious emotion, thought, or practice.

The German Army

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Though I thought Edward N. Luttwak's review of David Eisenhower's paean to his grandfather, *Eisenhower at War 1943-1945* [Books in Review, February], was apt and elegant, he made one remark that I felt needed elaboration: "It was simply a fact that one German soldier was worth three or four Allied soldiers in infantry combat until the very last weeks of the war."

How did Mr. Luttwak arrive at such an extraordinary statement?

DOUGLAS F. GLANT
Seattle, Washington

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK writes:

I sympathize with Douglas F. Glant. Most Allied soldiers did their best, and it was not their fault that they were so badly out-

classed by the Germans in straight infantry combat. Nor is it reassuring to contemplate that it was the most cruel of dictatorships that was the beneficiary of so much skill and devotion.

Unfortunately, the facts are undeniable: in Italy from 1943 on, in France and Northwestern Europe from June 1944 on, American, British, and lesser Allied forces fought with increasingly heavy fighter-bomber support against German forces that had less and less airpower on their side. Allied artillery—the decisive arm in most cases—outgunned German artillery, eventually in ratios of 10:1. Allied supplies were abundant in most cases, as against chronic German shortages. And finally, Allied forces were much more mobile, with their hundreds of thousands of trucks against Germans mostly on foot, with only horse-wagons to carry their supplies from the nearest (unbombed) railhead. Tanks, carriers, and trucks loom large in contemporary German newsreels but were a rarity on the battlefield.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these weighty advantages, Allied infantry could advance against German resistance only when it had a sharp numerical superiority—often more than 3:1 or 4:1. That had nothing to do with the mythical offense/defense ratio (only valid tactically, and in trench warfare), and when the Germans attacked, Allied infantry generally had large numerical superiorities to hold them.

The matter has been studied ever since 1944; a recent authoritative work is Martin Van Creveld's *Fighting Power* (Greenwood Press, 1982). Although other factors also played a role, the explanations offered so far include:

1. The Germans sent their best

men to combat units, including the infantry, as opposed to the Allied tendency to send the best men to the technical branches, sending only the leftovers to the infantry.

2. German officers were few (less than 4 percent of the total) but well-trained and much respected, as opposed to much higher Allied officer ratios, achieved by promoting "90-day wonders" who knew little and lacked the authority to lead their men.

3. The Germans devoted exceptional efforts to the training of combat noncommissioned officers; the German army could not provide lavish troop comforts but the best was reserved for front-line soldiers, while in the American army especially, the rear services lived well but front-line troops were often neglected. Above all, the German army protected the cohesion of units by always returning the wounded and ill to their own units when they had recovered while Allied armies mostly sent them to anonymous replacement pools. Far too often, Americans had to fight among strangers, instead of being with comrades they cared for, and whose respect they craved. Harsh as it was to all outsiders, the German army was very much a "caring" institution to its own men.

"My Mother's Conversion"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Never have I read anything in the realm of religion so engrossing as "My Mother's Conversion" by Dan Vittorio Segre [February].

COMMENTARY does itself proud by carrying in its pages this masterfully-told story—so meaningful for our times.

BEATRICE SADOWSKY
New York City



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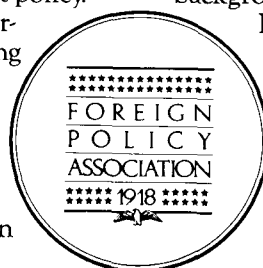
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Government by Lawyers & Judges

Walter Berns

WE CALL it judicial review, and while the point has frequently been disputed, sometimes fiercely, there is really no question but that the Framers intended federal judges to exercise the power to invalidate laws that they consider unconstitutional.

To be sure, under the provisions of Article III, the judges are not directly authorized to declare laws unconstitutional. The only power given them is to decide certain designated "cases" and "controversies." The power to declare laws unconstitutional derives from the necessity to decide a case or controversy in which one party is relying on the law and the other party is relying on the Constitution, and where the law and the constitutional provision are in conflict. This was said by Chief Justice John Marshall in 1803 in the celebrated case of *Marbury v. Madison* and has been settled doctrine ever since.

It could hardly be otherwise. It would certainly violate the most fundamental of republican principles were federal judges given political power, in the sense of deciding on the wisdom or desirability of proposed legislation. Federal judges serve for life. Because they never have to submit themselves to public scrutiny, they have no right to decide public or political questions. And they were given this independence from the voters precisely because they were expected to make decisions respecting private rights. The judges were expected to stay out of the one area, and the public was expected to stay out of the other.

Marshall drew this distinction in his opinion for the Court in the *Marbury* case. "The province of the court," he said, "is, solely, to decide on the rights of individuals. . . . Questions in their nature political, or which are, by the constitution and laws, submitted to the executive, can never be made in this court."

Federal judges were denied the power to decide

questions about the public good because, under the terms of republican government, such questions can be decided legitimately only with the consent of the governed. The public and their representatives were denied the power to decide questions about private rights because such questions can be decided legitimately only by some impartial body. When deciding questions about the public good it is relevant—indeed, in most cases it is essential—to exercise discretion and to weigh consequences; but discretion and the weighing of consequences may not properly enter into decisions respecting private rights. A court will have to decide whether the right exists—in the Constitution or in a statute—and, if so, what it is; but at that point inquiry ceases. What a person does with the right—for example, how he worships, what he says, or how he uses the money he earns or inherits—is none of the public's business (unless, of course, what he does is "adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community," to quote *Federalist 10*).

In short, the public good describes that area where the judges may not intrude, the area where what is done may be done *only* with the consent of the governed. Private rights describe that area where the public may not intrude, the area where what is done may be done *without* the consent of the governed.

The situation is confused today because the judges, and more precisely the Supreme Court Justices, have taken upon themselves the authority to *create* rights, and with every right created they have narrowed the range of the public or political area. The constitutional right to privacy, for example, was not written into the Constitution; it was created by being discovered in 1965 in "penumbras, formed by emanations" from the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Ninth Amendments. Eight years later, although not sure whether this "fundamental" right was located in the Ninth or the Fourteenth Amendment, the Court said it was "broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy." By creating rights—and, moreover, by acting as if this were a traditional prerogative of the judiciary—the Supreme Court

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narrowed the range of public questions over which the public might exercise its authority.

It did more than that. It began to treat the Constitution in the way the currently most fashionable literary critics treat a work of literature, as a text to be "deconstructed" and then, in a way, "reconstructed," but not interpreted because it has no "determinate" or "decidable" meaning; or better, as a text that can be interpreted but not misinterpreted. In this view, the job of the Supreme Court is not to expound the meaning of the Constitution but to provide it with meaning. Its highest function, so the argument goes, is a political function: to keep the Constitution up to date or in tune with the times. "The genius of the Constitution," says Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., "rests not in any static meaning it might have had in a world that is dead and gone, but in the adaptability of its great principles to cope with current problems and current needs"; and the Court is in charge of this adaptation.

Although Brennan, like many others, wrongly claims that this notion can be traced back to John Marshall, it is in fact the Fourteenth Amendment, adopted immediately after the Civil War, that has given rise to the extraordinary growth of judicial power he is at such pains to justify.

"**W**HO," James Madison had asked at the beginning, "are to be the electors of the federal representatives?" And he answered:

Not the rich, more than the poor; not the learned more than the ignorant; not the haughty heirs of distinguished names, more than the humble sons of obscure and unpropitious fortune. The electors are to be the great body of the people of the United States.

What Madison did not say in 1788 was, "not the white, more than the black," a deliberate omission the Fourteenth Amendment attempted to repair about seventy-five years later. Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment reads as follows:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Now, clearly, blacks were eligible to become part of the people of the United States—that is, citizens; and those born in the United States were declared to be citizens. As such, they were entitled to be represented in the lawmaking process where their rights would be protected. There they might be outvoted, but that was a prospect shared by

everybody. At least now, having been officially incorporated into the body politic, they would be governed not, as in the past, as slaves or subjects, but with their consent.

That was the promise, and on the face of the amendment it appeared to be a serious promise: section 2 stipulated that any state denying the right to vote and be represented was to be deprived of its congressional representation just so much. The sanction was clear and, apparently, mandatory. Congress by law would simply reduce the number of members to which the offending state would otherwise be entitled; or perhaps the House of Representatives would simply refuse to seat a proportion of the state's representatives, equal to the proportion of persons disenfranchised. As it turned out, however, although many a state denied or abridged the right, no serious effort was ever made in Congress to impose the sanction.

Nor did Congress make a serious effort to exercise the other major power granted it by the Fourteenth Amendment (in section 5), that of enumerating the privileges or immunities belonging to national citizenship. Although it has been a subject of considerable dispute, the power to provide that enumeration or specification seems to be crystal-clear in the language of the amendment, especially when read in the light cast by one of its related provisions.

Article IV of the unamended Constitution speaks of the privileges and immunities of *state* citizenship, and the language carries the presumption that enumeration of these privileges and immunities would be provided by the respective states. Would it not follow, having now for the first time prescribed the conditions of *national* citizenship, and having elevated national citizenship over that of the states, and having then, in the next sentence, spoken of the privileges or immunities of this national citizenship, that the Constitution intended to give Congress the authority to provide their substance?

Specifically, if New York may, by law or constitutional provision, declare that one of the privileges of New York citizenship is to sue in its courts, would it not seem an appropriate exercise of the power granted in section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment for Congress, by law and in the course of time, to declare that one of the privileges of national citizenship is to attend a nonsegregated public school? (A privilege that may not be abridged by "any law" of any state?) Yet Congress never made a serious effort to provide that enumeration, and this, combined with a ridiculous decision of the Supreme Court in 1873, had the effect of rendering the clause a practical nullity.

These failures on the part of Congress—indeed, on the part of the political branches of the government—had consequences that extended into our own time and will extend beyond it.

Although now formally a part of the people of the United States, black Americans remained politically isolated, unrepresented in the constitutional majorities that governed the country. This meant that their rights would not be secured by the institutions of representative government, and the problem this presented festered until, almost of necessity and certainly not unjustly, the Supreme Court intervened. Unfortunately, the instruments available to and employed by the Court were not well adapted to the use to which they were put, and using them caused them to be deformed. More than that, their use contributed to the deformation of the Constitution.

READ literally, the due-process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment imposes restrictions not on state legislatures or on the kind of laws they may enact but on state courts. It forbids those courts "to deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law"; which is to say, when imposing punishments or penalties on *any* person, the state courts are now under a national constitutional obligation to follow the accepted processes of law.

The equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, again when read literally, also says something of real importance to the state executives. Governors and sheriffs and the rest were now, for the first time, under a *national* constitutional obligation to provide the protection of the laws to any person within the jurisdiction of their states or counties, whether resident or visitor, citizen or alien, black or white, adult or child, male or female.

Only by distortion of their terms could either of these clauses be made a measure of the constitutionality of state *legislation*. But in the absence of congressional definitions of privileges or immunities, making them so is what the Supreme Court began to do toward the end of the 19th century.

One of the first so-called substantive due-process cases illustrates the point. Louisiana had enacted a statute forbidding the purchase of insurance from out-of-state companies and had sought to recover a sum of \$3,000 from a New Orleans cotton merchant who had insured a shipment with a New York company. Whatever might be said against the substance of this statute, Louisiana had not violated legal *process* by adopting or enforcing it. The Supreme Court nevertheless declared it to be a violation of due process. It said the liberty protected by the clause included the liberty to enter into contracts and then proceeded to say, in effect, that the states were forbidden to deprive any person of this liberty no matter what process, due or undue, it followed.

In this and a host of similar cases, the judges were exercising a power that had been explicitly

denied them in the Constitutional Convention of 1787: they were passing judgment on "the mere policy of public measures." Of necessity, and no doubt out of conviction as well, they cast these judgments in constitutional terms, but the time came when the people (led by the politicians) were not persuaded of the connection. By 1937, having long been "employed in the task of remonstrating agst. popular measures of the Legislature"—the words are those of Luther Martin in the 1787 convention—the Justices were on the verge of losing the confidence of the people, and it was on this confidence that their power ultimately depended. Hence, when President Franklin Roosevelt threatened to undermine their authority by "packing" the Court with new members of his choosing, the old members gracefully withdrew from the field. From that time forward, public economic policy would be made by officials constitutionally and nominally qualified to make it; at a minimum, it would henceforth be made with the consent of the governed.

What became true of economic policy, however, would prove not to be true of social policy; and with respect to racial policy especially, it would prove to be emphatically untrue.

THE "switch in time saved nine" in 1937 and also preserved the principle of judicial independence, but it could not by itself repair the damage done over the years to the Constitution. Thanks in large part to the Court's Fourteenth Amendment jurisprudence, the Constitution came to be seen not as the embodiment of fundamental and clearly articulated principles of government but as a collection of hopelessly vague and essentially meaningless words and phrases inviting judicial construction. In other words, it came to be understood as no more than an invitation to these insulated judges to make constitutional law and, when necessary, remake it.

For a time after 1937, the Court was disposed to decline that invitation and to defer to the judgments made in the political branches of government, both state and national. To a far greater extent than in the immediate past, statutes were to be presumed constitutional or, at least, not unconstitutional; this was stated as a principle in a famous footnote in an opinion handed down in a 1938 case. In the same footnote, however, the Court indicated that it would not necessarily be governed by that principle in all categories of cases. One of the exceptions, it said, might be cases involving statutes directed at "racial minorities."

What followed is too familiar to require elaboration: housing in formerly restricted neighborhoods was made available to black buyers; public schools and then public facilities generally were desegregated; and, to mention merely one more example, the various barriers to black voting were

removed. All this and more was accomplished by the courts directly or, in some cases, as the result of their initiative, and it was done because the states, governed by white majorities, had failed to act and because Congress had done nothing to cause them to act.

But, again, the instrument employed was ill-adapted to the task. The Court's treatment of racially restrictive real-estate covenants is one example. The covenants—private agreements entered into with a view to excluding (in this case) blacks from certain neighborhoods—were discriminatory but not, the Court acknowledged, illegal. Nevertheless, unlike other legal contracts, these were held to be unenforceable: "In granting judicial enforcement of the restrictive agreements in these cases, the States have denied petitioners the equal protection of the laws." But this was by no means evident, and nothing the Court said made it evident. The blacks were surely the victims of *private* discrimination, but if anyone was being denied the equal protection of the laws it was the white covenantors. They had entered into legal contracts, reprehensible but legal nevertheless, and they were denied access to the courts, where, alone, those contracts might be enforced. In short, they were denied the right to claim the protection of the laws, which Chief Justice Marshall said many years ago is "the very essence of civil liberty."

No more persuasive was the Court's rationale in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the public-school desegregation case. The black schoolchildren were surely being denied a privilege that ought to have been enjoyed by all citizens, but as even the most venerable opponents of racial discrimination have admitted, the Court did not make it evident that they were being denied the equal protection of the laws. The Court might have meant that for a state to separate by race is to treat races differently and therefore—although the conclusion is by no means obvious—unequally. Yet what it said was that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," a logical absurdity that evoked no comment from persons blandly contented with the result but hoots of derision from logicians and hostile white Southerners. Nothing in the Court's opinion could persuade them that the decision was rooted in, or issued from, the Constitution.

To prove its nonconstitutional origins, the state of Virginia sponsored a project culminating in the publication of a sizable volume of over 700 pages containing the legislative history and the debates in the post-Civil War Congress on the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. Careful study of these materials would enable "judges, lawyers, teachers, and students" to determine for themselves whether decisions such as that in *Brown v. Board of Education* "comport with the reconstruction amendments as originally understood and intended."

The project was, of course, naive in its conception and barren in its consequences. By this time the prevailing view was that Supreme Court Justices could not be bound by the original understanding of a constitutional provision or by the intent of its Framers, even if that understanding or intent could be unearthed from the rubble of those old words.

The good judge, according to this new view, does not engage in the hopeless and, more to the point, irrelevant task of trying to ascertain the "true" meaning of the equal-protection clause, for example. He does what Justice William O. Douglas was praised for doing: he raises the question of what is good for the country and seeks "to translate his answers . . . into constitutional law." The instruments he employs—the equal-protection clause or whatever—cannot be said to be ill-adapted, not to *this* task; on the contrary, the (presumed) vagueness of those clauses affords him the freedom he requires to do his job, which is to make public policy. "Interpreting those five little words ['equal protection of the laws'] is hardly a question of law in the ordinary sense," said Joseph Rauh, a one-time Supreme Court clerk and long-time Court watcher. "It is a matter of highest public policy based on history, custom, and current public morality."

AS THOSE "five little words" had come to be understood, Rauh was surely correct; interpreting them is not a matter of constitutional exposition. Read literally, the clause means that every "person" within the jurisdiction of a state—regardless of race, gender, age, nationality, social status, or whatever—is entitled to the protection of the laws, whatever they are. There is nothing in its language (or, for that matter, in its legislative history) that can serve as a measure of the constitutionality of the laws themselves. To make a decision on this basis is policy-making, and Rauh admits as much when he goes on to say that the "Supreme Court is part of our nation's political process, and the sooner this is accepted as inevitable the better." It has become, against the expressed will of the Framers, a council of revision and, because the Court casts them in constitutional terms, its revisions or policy decisions cannot be overridden or reversed.

In his Pulitzer Prize-winning book on the *Dred Scott* case, Professor Don E. Fehrenbacher writes that, while the decision in that case represented an effort on the part of the Supreme Court to turn back the clock of civilization, "in at least one respect it had a distinctly modern ring." Like its successor today, the *Dred Scott* Court was not content to play the role of constitutional censor of "public policies fashioned by other hands"; it attempted to do what the contemporary Court has succeeded in doing—namely, to become the initiator of social change. "Government by

judiciary," Fehrenbacher writes, "is now, in a sense, democracy's non-democratic alternative to representative government when the latter bogs down in failure or inaction." Not surprisingly, its most avid friends are of the opinion that government by judiciary is not a "non-democratic alternative"—that, in fact, the judiciary is more truly representative than even the Congress and, therefore, that the judges are under no obligation to wait for the other branches of government to "bog down."

Why wait when, according to Harvard law professor Abram Chayes, the judicial process is superior in all respects to the way things are done (or not done) in the legislative and executive branches? Chief among its presumed advantages is that it is governed by lawyers, and lawyers are governed by a "professional ideal of reflective and dispassionate analysis of the problem before [them] and [are] likely to have some experience in putting this ideal into practice."

Not only that, but it is a judge who presides over the process, a judge whose "professional tradition insulates him from narrow political pressures." Which is to say, the judge, unlike members of Congress, is insulated from the voters and, for that reason, is better able to govern. As Chayes would have it, the Framers provided a system of representative government because they failed to see the advantages of government by judiciary—either that, or they thought the lawyers of their day were unprepared to assume the responsibilities of statesmanship. Perhaps they thought them incapable of disinterested actions.

Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. In theory, the country was indeed founded by self-interested men who acted in order to secure their private rights; in practice, however, these same men pledged "to each other [their] Lives, [their] Fortunes and [their] sacred Honor." In theory, the country was founded by men claiming rights against one another; in fact, they were men closely associated in families, churches, and a host of other private institutions. According to their books, government is created by men who had been living in a state of nature and are seeking to escape its miseries; in fact, the American government was created by men whose characters had been formed under the laws of an older and civilized politics.

Moreover—and it is precisely here that the modern Supreme Court has shown its incapacities for governing—although the Framers (including all the lawyers among them) knew that their principles forbade the use of the laws directly to generate virtuous habits, they did not regard it as improper for the laws—and in practice this meant the laws of the states—to support the private institutions in which those habits had been generated and were to be generated. They apparently took it for granted that states

would use the law to support the institution of the family, for example; on at least one occasion even the Supreme Court acknowledged its *political* importance. Here is John Marshall writing for the Court in an 1823 case:

All know and feel . . . the sacredness of the connection between husband and wife. All know that the sweetness of social intercourse, the harmony of society, the happiness of families, depend on that mutual partiality which they feel, or that delicate forbearance which they manifest towards each other.

NO SUCH sentiment, no such appreciation, ever surfaces in a modern family case—not, that is, at the Supreme Court level. With a view to supporting the institution of the family, and in a variety of ways, the states punish and seek to inhibit illegitimacy; but the Court, starting "from the premise that illegitimate children are not 'nonpersons,'" that they are in fact "clearly 'persons' within the meaning of the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment," strikes such statutes down one and (almost) all. Only once did the Court, by the narrowest of margins, uphold such a statute—this one prohibiting an illegitimate child from sharing equally with legitimate children in the estate of a father—and here Justice Brennan, speaking for the four dissenters, complained that the majority had acted "to uphold the untenable and discredited moral prejudice of bygone centuries."

Tocqueville, the greatest of democratic educators, could write powerfully of the importance of the woman who, in the family, shapes the morals and manners by which democracy lives, who is allowed to choose her husband and is taught that "the springs of happiness are inside the home," and whose chastity as a young girl is protected not only by religion but by an education that limits her "imagination"; but not a trace of these lessons appears in today's Supreme Court decisions.

The old-fashioned state laws proscribing obscene—to say nothing of pornographic—publications are regarded by the modern Supreme Court as narrow-minded comstockery that, by inhibiting the liberty to "express oneself," are in flat violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. Indeed, Justice Douglas was of the opinion that obscenity was good for us, and quoted a Universalist minister in support of that judgment. One could never suspect from a reading of the Court's opinions in these censorship cases that, as Allan Bloom has written, "during the greater part of recorded history disinterested, that is to say, philosophic, men were of the opinion that republics required the greatest self-imposed restraints whereas tyrannies and other decadent regimes could afford the greatest individual liberties."

Tocqueville again, even more powerfully than

Washington in his farewell address, could argue the importance of religion in a democratic regime. "When any religion has taken deep root in a democracy," he wrote, "be very careful not to shake it, but rather guard it as the most precious heritage from aristocratic times." But such a concern is foreign to the modern Supreme Court. Nominally, at least, it allows statutes supporting religious institutions if their purpose is "secular," but in case after case the Court has managed to find that, whatever the purpose of the statute, its "primary effect" is to aid religion, and that cannot be permitted. Although the Court proceeds in blissful ignorance of the fact, what the First Amendment meant to the men who added it to the Constitution was not at all that government must be neutral between religion and irreligion.

It is not possible to point to a single statement proving that the Framers expected the states to provide the sort of civic or moral education required of citizens in a republican regime, but there is ample evidence that they were aware of the requirement. And it is incontestable that, from the very beginning, the states were aware of it and attempted to meet it, if only by supporting the private institutions whose business it was to provide such an education. The laws providing that support are certain to inhibit somebody's freedom, or somebody's idea of freedom, if only by depriving that somebody of his "right" to attend a public school where teachers are not required to "announce that a period of silence, not to exceed one minute in duration, shall be observed for meditation." And sadly, when these laws are tested under the rubric of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Court tends to expand the rights of republican citizenship but ignore altogether its conditions or preconditions.

Nowhere is this more evident than with the so-called right of self-expression. This new right has nothing to do with representative government in general or with the gaining of consent in particular. By this right one may "express" himself (or his *self*) by wearing obscene jackets in courthouse corridors, uttering the foulest of language in schoolboard meetings or publishing it in student newspapers, hanging the American flag upside down or wearing it on the seat of one's trousers or, under some circumstances, burning it. All forms of political expression, no doubt, but not the sort of *speech* that is calculated to elicit consent; nor, for that matter, is it uttered with that intention. On the contrary, it is a way of expressing contempt: for fellow citizens, for the country ("Amerika"), and for the very idea of representative government. "Those who are 'into' self-expression," as one authority put it recently, "do not care whether they gain a point by persuading a majority."

But to persuade a majority, or demonstrate a willingness to join one, is the constitutionally

prescribed way of exercising the most basic of human rights, the right to consent to government, or the right to govern oneself. It is the most basic right because, as we know from the Declaration of Independence, without a government to which we give our consent no rights are secure. By "creating" this new right of self-expression, then, and thereby encouraging persons intent on exercising it to the limit described in these decisions, the Supreme Court has—unwittingly no doubt—contributed to the weakening of that basic right, thus putting at risk the sort of representative and constitutional government that depends on it.

SUCCESS in the legislature is measured by the extent to which one's interest is accommodated in the law adopted by the majority, and to achieve that success it is necessary to display a willingness to be accommodating oneself. Immoderate and outrageous demands especially are not likely to be successful, which explains why immoderate politicians are disdainful of legislative assemblies. "Take away that fool's bauble," Oliver Cromwell shouted, the bauble being the mace symbolizing the authority of the House of Commons.

Success in the Courts, however, is measured by having one's interest declared a right, and with the right comes the freedom to be immoderate because—to repeat—the right defines an area where the public may not enter. And the modern Supreme Court has done little to discourage interests that are immoderate to begin with. When the Court looks into those "penumbras, formed by emanations" from a potpourri of constitutional provisions and manages to find a "right" to terminate a pregnancy, it is almost inevitable that it will be asked to look again and see if it cannot come up with a right to engage in consensual sodomy. And had the Court succeeded in finding it—and it recently came within one vote of doing so—it would have inevitably been asked to look one more time and see if it could not find hidden somewhere in those shadows the "fundamental right" to be incestuous. After all, as one law professor said back in 1973, the Constitution protects all fundamental rights, sexual expression is a fundamental right, and sexual intercourse between "blood relatives" is one form of that expression.

But what foundation is there for any of these new "rights"? This nation began by declaring that certain rights—among them the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—are unalienable or natural, and natural because they are grounded in the nature of man. Many an American at the time was familiar with the philosophical works purporting to prove this. Then, because there was a general agreement that these rights were indeed fundamental, we the people were able to institute a government designed to secure

them. In the literal sense of the word, we were able to *found* a government on what was understood to be fundamental. It is not possible to believe that we could have founded a government on the right to terminate a pregnancy or the so-called right to engage in consensual sodomy, even if some judge or some law professor were solemnly to assure us that they were fundamental. Besides, what could possibly be the basis for such an assurance or such a declaration?

Justice Harry A. Blackmun, whose most enduring legacy to the American people will be his opinion in *Roe v. Wade*, the leading abortion case, wrote the principal dissent in the sodomy case, *Bowers v. Hardwick*. He began by protesting that, contrary to what was said in the majority opinion, the case did not concern a fundamental right to engage in homosexual sodomy but, rather, the fundamental right "to be let alone." But that argument carries no weight whatever. There is, and can be, no general constitutional right to be let alone. Let alone to do what? To worship? Absolutely. To read? Yes. To waste time? Even that. But to rob a bank? To counterfeit money? To make noise? To refuse to be vaccinated? To shoot heroin? To manufacture it? To make child pornography films?

In countless ways the law invades privacy, even (with a warrant) the privacy of the home. So it is not enough to speak abstractly of a right to be let alone, and, implicitly at least, Blackmun acknowledges this in the very next sentence when he says that the Georgia statute at issue "denies individuals the right to decide for themselves whether to engage in particular forms of private, consensual sexual activity." So the question is, what is the foundation for *this* so-called right? And the answer is, no more than the interest that some persons have in being let alone to engage in that form of sexual activity.

The Court is undoubtedly under pressure from the jurisprudence currently in fashion in the prestigious law schools to take rights seriously. Fair enough. But contrary to the purveyors of this fashion—in the press as well as in the schools—this does not require the Court to grant interests the status of rights, as if by natural right a person consents to government on condition that his interests be satisfied. This is absurd because it is impossible, and it is impossible because not all interests can be satisfied.

For example, it is a fact that the interests of the pro- and anti-abortion groups cannot both be satisfied. Indeed, by making abortion a right, the Court brought into being an organized and frequently violent anti-abortion interest. And that is likely to happen whenever the Court declares an activity to be a fundamental right when it is demonstrably—because it has no basis in nature, in convention, or in contemporary opinion—not a fundamental right. A professor (Ronald Dworkin) who set out to take rights seriously

proceeded to find, in a model of government of his own devising, a fundamental right to disobey the law, which, if exercised by a significant number of persons, would return us to the state of nature where we could enjoy that "right" to our hearts' content—to our hearts' content but within the limits of a life that, if Hobbes was correct, will be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." And that is the direction in which the Court's decisions have been taking us.

No government, not even the most liberal or generous, can promise to satisfy all wants or interests. What it can fairly promise, if it is properly organized, is security for those rights that are understood to be unalienable or fundamental, which in practice will mean the right to be governed only with one's consent. Under the Constitution's system of representative government, this becomes the right to be part of a governing majority. Such majorities cannot be constructed out of the variety of hostile single-interest groups that have been generated by the Supreme Court's recent holdings under the Fourteenth Amendment, an amendment adopted in order to make one people where there had previously been two.

Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? Who indeed will guard the guardians themselves? The extravagance of the power now claimed by some members of the Court is nowhere better seen than in Justice Brennan's actions in a women's-rights case decided during the period when the so-called Equal Rights Amendment, having been proposed by the required two-thirds vote in each House of Congress, was awaiting ratification by the required three-fourths of the states (a ratification it never received). The issue in the case, *Frontiero v. Richardson*, or more precisely, the issue on which the Justices were divided, was whether sex, like race, should be treated as a suspect classification. If so, states would be required to bear a heavier burden when attempting to justify the distinctions drawn in the statute.

Brennan circulated a draft opinion on the limited grounds, and then he sent around an alternative section that proposed a broad constitutional ban, declaring classification by sex virtually impermissible. He knew that his alternative would have the effect of enacting the Equal Rights Amendment, which had already passed Congress and was pending before the state legislatures. But Brennan was accustomed to having the Court out in front, leading any civil-rights movement.

The authors of this account conclude by quoting Brennan as being of the opinion that there "was no reason to wait several years for the states to ratify the amendment"—no reason other than the fact, which Brennan knew to be a fact, that the Constitution *as then written* would not sup-

port the decision he wanted the Court to render. Unable to persuade Justice Potter Stewart to join the coalition he had put together, Brennan lamented to his law clerks that he had come "within an inch of authoring a landmark ruling that would have made the Equal Rights Amendment unnecessary."

No statement is more revealing of the contemporary liberal's view of the Constitution and the powers of the Court respecting it. It says, in effect, that Brennan and any four of his colleagues are entitled to do in private—in the privacy of the Court's conference room—what may be done in public only by extraordinary majorities of the states and of the House and Senate. It says, in effect, that the Constitution may be amended in two ways, one difficult and the other easy; one public and the other private; one by following the procedures delineated in Article V of the Constitution and the other by vote of William J. Brennan, Jr., joined by four other Supreme Court Justices. Assigned the task of being the "faithful guardians" of the Constitution, these Justices fancy themselves its surrogate parents.

The recently decided Santa Clara County affirmative-action case provides further evidence of Justice Brennan's disdain for constitutional law

and, indeed, for the very idea of constitutionalism. In his majority opinion, Brennan converts a federal statute forbidding racial and gender discrimination (the Civil Rights Act of 1964) into one effectively requiring, indeed compelling, such discrimination, and by doing so reminds us of that legendary National League umpire, Bill Klem, who, in response to a batter's protest that the pitch was a ball, outside the strike zone, said, "It ain't nothin' till I call it."

The Santa Clara case establishes these three propositions: (1) some people do not have to obey the law; (2) they do not have to obey it when a Supreme Court majority does not like the law as written; (3) there is nothing in the Constitution preventing Justice Brennan, speaking for that majority, from simply rewriting the law to suit his fancy.

Meanwhile, the rest of us—members of Congress, the President, Admiral John Poindexter, Colonel Oliver North, and plain private citizens—are expected to obey the law as well as the Constitution. Following Brennan's example, however, we can also be expected to want to change this requirement to obey the law when it suits *our* fancy. That we are entitled to do this is the lesson in constitutionalism taught by Justice Brennan.

The Uses of Exodus

Fernanda Eberstadt

IF THE biblical Book of Genesis is the story of one family—in today's parlance, we might call it a "multigenerational saga"—then the book which follows, Exodus, is the story of the birth of a nation and its constitution, of a people's binding with God by history and by covenant. In the Book of Exodus, God brings His people Israel out of Egyptian slavery with many miracles; He gives them the Law at Mount Sinai; He takes up dwelling in the tabernacle, a portable sanctuary constructed by His servant Moses, and leads the Israelites on their way to conquering the land He promised their forefathers. Freedom and law—these are the twin subjects of Exodus; both, the book tells us, lie in obedience to the Almighty God. Indeed, it seems strangely consistent with their later history that of all the peoples of the world, the Jews should have become an autonomous nation, possessed of a comprehensive body of social, political, and religious laws, even before they had a land of their own.

As Exodus is the book without which there would be no Jewish people and no Judaism, it is hardly surprising that its text should prove of central importance to Near Eastern scholars, archeologists, theologians, historians, and political scientists alike. In the last several years, four significant works on Exodus aimed at a general and secular audience have been published just in the United States, besides the much larger number of academic essays and monographs in English and other languages in the various centers of scholarship around the world. Since two of the four are by biblical scholars, and two by political scientists, and since all four authors bring an avowedly Jewish perspective to bear on their subject, their more or less simultaneous convergence in print provides a happy occasion to look both at Exodus itself and also at certain recent trends in biblical interpretation.

BECAUSE every translation of the Bible is itself a historically-conditioned act of interpretation, it is

appropriate to call Everett Fox's *Now These Are the Names* both a new rendering of Exodus and a commentary.* *Now These Are the Names*—the title, after the fashion by which biblical books are known in Jewish tradition, is drawn from the first words of Exodus—is the second volume in a projected translation of the entire Pentateuch. Fox, who teaches at Clark University, has already published *In the Beginning* (1983), a thoughtful and stimulating rendition of Genesis.

Fox belongs to a new generation of scholars who have brought to the study of the Bible the methods and assumptions of literary criticism. This approach, which seeks to repair the excessive atomization of the Hebrew Scriptures wrought by 19th-century scholarship, looks at the Bible as one rich and complexly ordered creation of the imagination, and examines its poetry, narrative, and law in terms of language, structure, imagery, and other conscious literary devices. The best-known practitioner of this critical genre is Robert Alter, whose "A Literary Approach to the Bible" (COMMENTARY, December 1975) remains the most penetrating and temperate exposition of its principles.

The literary approach, which today has its formalists, its New Critics, and even its deconstructionists, does not necessarily betoken a radical departure either from rabbinic exegesis or from 19th-century modes of textual analysis. Rather, as Fox stresses in his introduction to *Now These Are the Names*, the literary approach should be seen as "the uncovering of another side of the Bible's meaning," a supplement to older schools of biblical scholarship which, together with them, is intended to enrich our understanding of "the totality and greatness of the literature that lies before us." Indeed, this conception of the Bible, which in some respects resembles a contemporary and secular reinstatement of rabbinic holism (with the artist standing in for God) itself has a pedigree that can be traced back at least a generation to Martin Buber. It thus seems fitting that Everett Fox, who wrote his doctoral thesis on the German translation of Genesis done earlier in the century by Martin Buber and Franz Rosen-

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* Schocken, 230 pp., \$16.95.

zweig, should use their rendition of Hebrew Scriptures as the model and inspiration for his own.

The Buber-Rosenzweig translation of the Bible, assailed by contemporaries as being at once barbaric, snobbishly affected, and inaccessibly Jewish, was revolutionary in several respects. Consciously wrestling against the familiar, Christian-conditioned cadences of Martin Luther's authoritative translation, Buber and Rosenzweig employed an archaizing literalism purposely reminiscent of rabbinic exegesis. At the same time (as the biblical scholar Edward L. Greenstein has observed), Buber and Rosenzweig's translation also owes a great deal to German Romanticism, with its theories of ancient literature as an oral tradition intended for performance and its belief in the essential untranslatability of language. Buber maintained that the translator should actively accentuate, even exaggerate, this quality of untranslatability, and strive to produce a rendition so difficult and ungainly that the serious reader would be driven to consult the original for himself.

From these twin premises of an oral poet and an untranslatable text, Buber and Rosenzweig spawned a wholly new language; their translation of the Bible was punctuated in breath-length bursts to suit recitation, and was larded with Hebraisms, German archaisms, and neologisms coined to convey to the 20th-century reader the cryptic brevity and urgency of the Hebrew text, as well as the full range of meanings suggested in the three-letter roots from which most Hebrew words derive. Their return to etymological roots frequently had the effect of stripping away Christian associations and arriving at a more starkly Israelite conception: thus, "altar" became "slaughter-site," angel "messenger," and prophet "proclaimer," while "sacrifice" was returned to its suggestive Hebrew root, "coming-nigh" (or "bringing-near"). Buber and Rosenzweig's most important innovation, however, was their targeting of *Leitwörter*, significant key words in the Hebrew text whose repetitions had customarily been suppressed by translators in the interests of a varied style, but which Buber and Rosenzweig recognized as imparting essential information about the meaning and character of biblical heroes, events, and laws.

In his own English translation of Exodus, Everett Fox closely follows Buber and Rosenzweig's methodology and outlook, opting for an ungainly and foreign-sounding literalism intended to impress upon a diffuse and modern tongue something of the biblical Hebrew's intensely packed brevity, its syncopated rhythms and choppy diction, its emotional passion, its wealth of alliteration, paranomasia (same sound), puns, and significant repetitions of key words. Although he acknowledges that contemporary scholarship has moved away from the theory that ancient literature derives principally from oral material, Fox's translation, like Buber and Rosenzweig's, is punctuated in spurts of language, sometimes no more

than one or two words to a line, and is most emphatically intended to be recited aloud.

Fox also strives to expose in English the biblical Hebrew's root meanings: thus, the biblical "month of Aviv" is rendered etymologically as "New Moon of Ripe Grain." The compactness and mobility of Hebrew verbs, which Buber and Rosenzweig conveyed by an aggressive Hebraizing of German, converting nouns into verbs, Fox communicates more timidly by such gawky formulations as "turn-them-into-smoke," "provide-that-he-shall-be-healed," "be-a-priest," "bear-fruit," or "become-many," phrases which in Hebrew are contained in one word. (In an apparent desire to have it both ways, Fox alludes in his footnotes to agonized misgivings over his choice of words and proposes alternative formulations that are almost always more audacious than the ones he has settled upon in his text. This unfortunate habit gives his translation at times a withheld or vacillating air which is of course quite foreign to the Hebrew original.)

ALTHOUGH one might have wished that Fox had exerted greater pressure upon the English to reproduce the German version's linguistic inventiveness or the Hebrew original's brevity, his Englishing of Exodus is nonetheless engaging. *Now These Are the Names*, with its insistent assonance and alliteration, its hyphenated construct-words, its breathless diction, and its fixed epithets, looks and sounds to a contemporary reader like nothing so much as an Anglo-Saxon epic, after the manner of *The Battle of Maldon* or *Beowulf*. This is all the more the case since Fox in his translation of Exodus tends to emphasize the bloody, the violent, and the magical, bringing out buried hints of primordial monsters and battles between God and seabests. The Anglo-Saxon effect is actually quite seemly, since much of the Bible's verse and speech is itself deliberately archaic, and a poem like the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1-21) would likely have had an antiquated flavor even to its original audience.

At its best, Fox's literalism brings out the frantic and sometimes almost speechless fervor of biblical speech, whose stuttering, tongue-tied cadences and mobility of emotion are lost in the longer periods and more regular majesty of the King James Version. A particularly acute instance is Fox's translation of the law protecting widows and orphans in Exodus 22:22-24—a law so close to God's heart that, like Moses, He almost seems to gasp and stammer in contemplating its violation:

Any widow or orphan you are not to afflict.
Oh, if you afflict, afflict them. . . !
For (then) they will cry, cry out to me,
I will hearken, yes, hearken to their cry,

my anger will rage
and I will kill you with the sword,
so that your wives become widows, and
your children, orphans!*

If Everett Fox loses Buber and Rosenzweig's extreme originality, in one respect at least he may be said to have improved upon their Bible. Whereas the highly romantic Buber tends (as Fox put it in his 1974 dissertation) "to a great extent to minimize the importance of the Law in Judaism," *Now These Are the Names* displays a fit sense of the all-illuminating centrality of covenant and tabernacle. Indeed, Fox's rather gaudy and baroque rendition of the ornamentation of the tabernacle and the garb of the priests enlivens a major portion of Exodus which many readers find dull. This correction is all the more welcome since literary critics of the Bible have been accused, with some justice, of accentuating its poetic and narrative aspects at the expense of law.

Acknowledging in his preface the "provisional" and "time-bound" nature of all translation, Fox likens his rendition of Exodus to a musical performance which, he hopes, will startle a lay audience into perceiving new meanings and gaining new pleasures. In this respect, it may indeed be said that Fox's *Now These Are the Names* constitutes more of a curiosity than serious competition for a standard translation, serving principally to remind the reader with a jolt that the Hebrew Bible was not written by King James or, for that matter, the Jewish Publication Society of America, but rather was composed a very long time ago, in an ancient and difficult language, for an audience possessing beliefs, tastes, and traditions very different from our own. Fox's chief accomplishment, besides underlining the Bible's artistic unity, is to accentuate this quality of otherness. In doing so, his translation at its most daring also succeeds in conveying to us some of Exodus's sheer emotive power, drawing us closer to those moments of mounting heat at Mount Sinai when sentences falter, narrative grows jagged, and God suddenly seems likely to hurtle through human bounds and sweep us away with the full velocity of revelation.

AMONG recent interpretations of Exodus, none is more accessible to the common reader than that of Nahum Sarna, professor emeritus of biblical studies at Brandeis, and author, previously, of the splendid *Understanding Genesis* (1970). To that volume now comes a fit sequel, *Exploring Exodus*.†

Nahum Sarna occupies a very particular territory in the landscape of biblical studies, which is itself (as he remarks in his introduction to *Understanding Genesis*) a fairly new—and highly polemical—discipline. In the late 17th century, the philosopher Baruch Spinoza laid the groundwork for a scientific and methodological approach to Bible study. In contrast to traditional rabbinic and Christian exegesis, which understood Scripture as

a divinely revealed whole, Spinoza deemed it instead a haphazard accretion of legends and laws harking back to different centuries and regions and, in his famous words, "promiscuously heaped together." Spinoza proposed an analytical approach which would seek to separate the canon into all its disparate sources and to identify, where possible, their dates of composition, origins, and authors.

This approach, informed by a rational skepticism and sometimes by a not-so-rational animosity to the people of Israel and their religion, came to full fruition in the scientific study of Scripture known as the Higher Criticism or as the Historical-Critical School, which flourished in 19th-century Germany and has dominated biblical scholarship ever since. In recent years, the Higher Criticism has been strengthened and supplemented by the various fields of comparative Near Eastern studies, which have discovered in other cultures any number of analogues for the rites, laws, literature, and institutions once thought to be unique to biblical Israel. Thus, Noah and his ark have been shown to be the offspring of a Sumerian flood story, Joseph and Potiphar to have their Egyptian forebears, while Moses's Passover has been exposed as a kind of Israelite Presidents' Day Weekend, that is, a handy amalgam of two existing holidays, one pastoral, the other agricultural.

If our vision of the Bible's revolutionary uniqueness has been in some ways modified and refined by comparative Near Eastern studies, however, its claims to historical veracity, bruised by the Higher Criticism, have been much restored by recent archeological findings, many of which have served to confirm biblical geography and events. Together with the scrolls found near the Dead Sea, these discoveries have, in Sarna's words, "led in turn to a more positive reevaluation of the general integrity and antiquity of our received Hebrew text."

The Higher Criticism inevitably has had a mixed legacy. On the one hand, it has decisively influenced our view of the historical and cultural conditions which produced the Hebrew Bible, and has immeasurably improved our understanding of its language. It is no exaggeration to say that all academic Bible study today, at least in Europe and the United States, owes its methods and assumptions to the spadework done by the Higher Criticism. (Israeli scholars seem less taken with it.) On the other hand, as Sarna confirms, while pretending to a scientific certainty many of whose conclusions have been difficult to sustain, the Higher Criticism has proved undeniably reductionist and atomistic. If its minute and hairsplit-

* King James Version: "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry. And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."

† Schocken, 277 pp., \$17.95.

ting attributions were applied to modern literature, *Moby-Dick*, for example, would be revealed to be the work of five different schools of "redactors" working centuries apart. (In fact, this same falsely precise skepticism led 19th-century scholars to attribute to minor Elizabethans like Nashe and Greene acts and scenes of plays now believed to be wholly Shakespeare's.) Most seriously, as Sarna observes in *Understanding Genesis*, with its emphasis on historicity and source-differentiation, the Higher Criticism has tended to overlook the Bible's religious significance, giving us little sense of why, 2,000 years after its final canonization, much of the world today still worships the God of Israel and not Babylon's Marduk, Ishtar, or Shamash.

Nahum Sarna himself professes what might be called the Higher Criticism with a human face—that is, a historicism that is modern and rational, yet suffused by a sense of religious purposiveness and guided by a vigilant recognition of the revolutionary newness of the biblical concepts of God, nature, history, land, people, and leadership.

IN *Exploring Exodus*, Sarna leads us through the biblical book chapter by chapter, providing historical background and philological explanations. He examines the servitude under Pharaoh in the light of what we know today of Egypt's monarchies, its use of slave labor, its methods of city-building and brick-making, its topography, its religions, its educational system. He compares Moses's birth-story to other "abandoned hero" tales like the Mesopotamian Legend of Sargon. He analyzes the Ten Plagues for possible climatic and seasonal causes, and then rejects these explanations. He charts a likely geographical course for Israel through the wilderness and delineates the histories and customs of the peoples they encounter on their journey. He instances modern-day Bedouin variants of the portable sanctuary which Moses builds and likens the idolatrous golden calf to the cherubim that by divine decree adorn the tabernacle's inner sanctum. Most importantly, Sarna provides us with a comprehensive and penetrating exploration of the covenant which God strikes with His people at Mount Sinai, comparing this pact with Near Eastern vassal treaties and its statutes with those of other legal documents recently discovered in the region.

But where others have instanced these same Akkadian, Sumerian, and Egyptian parallels to demonstrate that Israel, a brash newcomer on the scene of Near Eastern history, merely pirated institutions, gods, and stories from the great and by-then decadent civilizations of the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates valleys, Sarna in each case shows how Israel's radically different conception of the one universal and invisible God, Creator of heaven and earth, caused it to reshape, transform, unify, or depart significantly from material common to the peoples of the ancient Near East. If other

historical scholars, in what Sarna dubs "parallelomania," have emphasized sameness, he reveals the more illuminating differences and contrasts between Israel and its older neighbors.

In what areas of life were biblical Israel's innovations most pronounced? In his introduction to *Exploring Exodus*, Sarna gives us some initial sense of the wholesale recasting of time and history which results from the events recounted in Exodus. In the biblical view, history is at once a providential enactment of God's grand design, as initiated in the creation, and the ultimate source of biblical religion and of normative Judaism. One concrete historical act, the release of Israel from Egyptian slavery (which some rabbinic and literary interpreters conceive of as a second creation), provides compelling cause for Israel's consent to the law revealed at Mount Sinai; the acceptance of that law will in turn convert the twelve tribes, however imperfectly, haltingly, and haphazardly, into a holy people, a nation of priests, separate from the other nations and endowed with a unique destiny. Similarly, this one time-bound event, which almost all scholars now date in the 13th century BCE,* is the continued justification for Israel's fealty to God and His teachings centuries and millennia after the deeds described in Exodus took place. Thus, to cite but one of a multitude of examples within the Bible itself, the prophet Amos, in a book compiled some 500 years after the exodus, can still enjoin his compatriots in the name of the God "who brought you up from the land of Egypt and led you through the wilderness forty years. . . ."

Stranger and more compelling still is the book's innate sense of a projected historical consciousness, according to which future generations will reenact imaginatively the events of the exodus, each man as if he himself in person had been freed from slavery under Pharaoh, had wandered in the desert with Moses, and had received, and accepted, the Torah at Mount Sinai. A holiday specifically devoted to the remembrance of these events is ushered in by Moses himself, a figure whose own historical consciousness is so acute that when the hungry Israelite tribes receive the heavenly manna that will sustain them for forty years, his first thought is to preserve some in a jar, to be placed in the sanctuary so that those yet unborn may see how the Lord fed their fathers in the desert. Sarna does not say so, but once again it seems strangely appropriate to later Jewish history, with its externally dictated necessities and its stress on tradition and memory, that this first house of worship should be both portable and also, in a limited sense, a museum, whose exhibits testify to events in Israelite history confirming divine providence.

* The archeologist Emmanuel Anati in his *Mountain of God* (Rizzoli, 360 pp., \$75.00), however, has provocatively antedated the exodus by a thousand years to 2200 BCE.

As Sarna points out, the exodus from Egypt occasioned a wholly new calendar and rearrangement of time. With the bringing forth from slavery comes a new year, blending lunar and solar calendars, and a new set of seasonal festivals all rerooted in historical events: the departure from Egypt, the giving of the Torah, the dwelling in booths in the desert. Most significant of all is the forging of a new six-day week, stubbornly independent of planetary movements, with a seventh day of rest divinely ordained for all classes of society, including slaves and foreigners—an institution without precedent in the ancient Near East and one which impresses upon the surface of days a swiftly recurrent image and reenactment of God's own repose after the creation of heaven and earth.

With the exodus comes not only a new notion of history and time, new festivals, new laws of dietary purity, but also a dramatically new social and political order whose legal statutes are informed by the experience of slavery in Egypt and thereby endowed with a peculiar psychological and ethical force. "With the historicizing of religion comes the ethicizing of history," writes Sarna. Again and again throughout the legal sections of Exodus, diverse rulings—in which Israelites are commanded to feed and clothe the stranger, to observe the Sabbath, and to leave gleanings for the poor and orphaned, or are prohibited from "abhorring" an Egyptian or from taking "a widow's garment in pawn"—are explained and anchored by the refrain, "For remember you were strangers [or slaves] in Egypt." This reminder, as one commentator has observed, would seem to go defiantly against the grain of human nature. For whereas a people emerging from slavery into independent nationhood might naturally be expected to put behind it so shameful, scarring, and dehumanizing a condition, Israel is repeatedly and insistently enjoined to keep alive the memory of its former servitude, not only in order to avoid "oppressing the stranger" but also in order actively to get inside his skin and feel as he feels.*

SARNA is particularly acute in his discussion of those four pillars of biblical religion which are founded in Exodus: monotheism and law, people and prophet (or national leader). As Sarna observes, although Genesis establishes the supremacy of one universal God, it is only in Exodus that we see waged a total war against polytheism (personified by Egypt and the golden calf), as God seeks to win to His teachings not only Israel but all the nations of the world. In Exodus, too, we first see the terms of His service concretely rendered. Whereas Abraham obeys individual messages from the Lord, Moses inscribes for time immemorial the conditions of a daily life sanctified in the service of an invisible

and omniscient God, to be revered not in images but in words, in the very letter of the law.

Sarna's comparison of the Ten Commandments and their sequels in the Pentateuch with Mesopotamian, Hittite, and Amorite legal tracts serves to underline how radically different is the Israelite conception of human life and its obligations. Other Near Eastern legal codes, many of which were explicitly intended only for dissemination among priests or the nobility, stem from earthly kings and hence are subject to revision. More importantly, they invariably separate religious, economic, and interpersonal codes of conduct, and lay down grievous (and sometimes vicarious) punishments for their infraction. Biblical law, in contrast, which is to be learned and voluntarily consented to by every Israelite, fuses family law, property law, cultic and socio-moral requirements—a fusion presupposing an integrated view of life in which religious observance and (in Sarna's words) "the desire to conform to the will of God" necessarily dictate the worshipper's treatment of neighbors, mother and father, servants, and the poor, and in which shady business dealings, the withholding of wages, or the unmannerly collection of a debt constitutes a religious offense.

No less revolutionary than the divine source of law is the notion of peoplehood that follows from its acceptance. As a result of the covenant with God, "the entire nation is conceived as being a corporate entity, a collectivity, a sort of 'psychic totality,'" a still-unique phenomenon which has determined the Jewish people's miraculous survival long after the Hittites and Peruzzites have bitten the dust. From this national and communal, as well as individual, duty to keep the Law stems the ongoing obligation regularly to read aloud its provisions to the assembled public: an obligation which in time resulted in the practice of attending synagogue and, indeed, church.

Finally, in Exodus we see the emergence of the prophet, a figure who must combine within himself the sometimes conflicting impulses of obedience to God and love of his people. The prophet's function (as Yochanan Muffs has described it) is to "stand in the breach" between the Lord and Israel, calming God's rage against Israel's intermittent deviations and mutinies and arguing Him out of His periodic longings to scorch to dust a people whom the 17th-century English poet John Dryden sardonically called "a Headstrong, Moody, Murmuring race/As ever try'd th'extent and stretch of grace." This role, which Martin Buber identified as that of "dialogic man," Moses loyally fulfills, for there has lived no greater lover of his

* Still, for anyone tempted to apply this injunction with reference to today's Middle East, it is well to remember that "the stranger in your land" refers to one who willingly and peaceably lives among you, abiding by your laws, not one who wishes to drive every last man of you into the sea.

people than this Egyptian-raised princeling whose first act on the biblical scene is to murder an Egyptian overseer for smiting a Hebrew. But in addition to his function as intercessor, which later prophets like Samuel or Jeremiah equally fulfill, Moses is a nation-builder—or, better, a kind of national and religious drill sergeant, who keeps a rebellious yet slave-minded rabble in the desert forty years, molds them into a fighting force capable of conquering a well-inhabited land, and with tender and watchful concern imbues them and their posterity with the soul-transforming habits of ethical monotheism.

NAHUM SARNA's book contains no controversial reinterpretations, but rather offers a wonderfully clear compilation and evaluation of historical matter and of recent scholarly findings. It is written for the general reader, and charged throughout by an alert, steady, and profound reverence for the Bible, its religion, and its people. Sarna's few unconventional readings result in the main from an understandable—if, finally, less than persuasive—impulse to present the biblical text in all respects as rational, enlightened, and consistent.

One example is Sarna's explanation of the question of how Jacob's descendants in Egypt could have swelled so rapidly from a household of 70 to a nation boasting 600,000 able-bodied men (implying a general Israelite population of two million). After rehearsing all the demographic possibilities, Sarna straightens out this crux by suggesting that 600,000 is the number of able-bodied Israelites not in Egypt at the time of the exodus but in Israel at the time when the Book of Exodus was completed, in Davidic days—an anachronism imposed upon the text in Exodus's own spirit of retrospective historical participation. Less satisfactory is Sarna's apologetic interpretation of the episode of the golden calf. The children of Israel, in his reading, intended it not as an idol to worship—that is, as an alternative to God—but rather as a “pedestal” to God, and hence merely an (unauthorized) alternative to the cherubim which adorned the tabernacle. This reading would appear to be an unjustified mitigation of a crime so cardinal that its commission tempts the Lord to wipe out every last Israelite save Moses, to whom He offers the job of fathering a new “great nation” and chosen people. (Moses declines.)

Puzzling, too, is Sarna's omission, in what is otherwise a meticulous and thoroughgoing commentary, of the famous “bloody bridegroom” incident (Exodus 4:24-26) in which God tries to kill Moses on his return journey from Midian to Egypt and releases him only after Moses's wife has cut off their son's foreskin. This dark, mystifying, and semantically obscure passage has been read in a variety of ways: as a further consecration of the rite of circumcision, as a parallel to Jacob's

wrestling with the angel, as a foreshadowing of God's slaughter of the Egyptian first-born, showing the atropic power of blood, and as a reminder that a single universal God necessarily subsumes within Himself demonic forces and murderous impulses. Sarna passes over the incident in silence.

These rare omissions or questionable readings point to a certain *Tendenz*. Ours, Sarna acknowledges, is an age whose prevailing orthodoxy is an aggressive unbelief, and one that would certainly be deaf to fundamentalist exegesis—which, in its ignorance and dogmatism, is actually responsible in his view for having caused the Bible to seem unworthy of the attention of readers in long pants. Instead, Sarna proffers a brand of biblical scholarship aimed, as he writes in his introduction to *Understanding Genesis*, at making the Bible “intelligible, relevant, and, hopefully, inspiring to a sophisticated generation possessed of intellectual curiosity and ethical sensitivity.” This he beautifully accomplishes, but his approach is not immune to objection.

Just as the Higher Criticism, by focusing on sources and parallels and questions of textual corruption, overlooked the theological complexity and the grandeur of Scripture, so an exclusively rational reading scants those powerful irrational forces in the Bible which, though less palatable to a modern sensibility, are intrinsic to its essence: the jealous and bloodthirsty vengefulness of the Lord, the recurrent depravities of His people, even the flights of a sometimes exaggerating fancy. When God repeatedly thunders that He will “blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven,” it is correct to read this bloody vow, with Sarna, as “a summons always to be prepared for self-defense” and “a realistic appraisal of Israel's situation as a weak nation in a hostile world”—correct, but not quite sufficient.

A more serious objection is that by formulating the appeal of the Bible in solely secular terms, Sarna may have already given up the ground to atheism. For if the lost or diminished authority of Scripture is ever to be recovered, the job will not be accomplished by making its delights and teachings “relevant” to a “mature” audience—for “relevance,” we have the far less strenuous substitutes provided by Erich Fromm or M. Scott Peck—but through a wholehearted embrace of even its “immature” elements of faith, however inimical these may sometimes seem to so-called reason.

SUCH reservations aside, however, *Exploring Exodus* is undoubtedly the deepest and most intelligent work on the biblical book that we will see for some time, and it is one which makes a curious contrast with two frankly political studies that have appeared in the last several years, Michael Walzer's *Exodus and Revolution** and Aaron Wildavsky's *The Nursing*

* Basic Books, 177 pp., \$15.95.

*Father: Moses as a Political Leader.** These two authors are alike in possessing, as each confesses in his preface, a modicum of prior Jewish learning or background in the Bible, yet both examine the exodus story from a self-consciously Jewish stance, and both try to locate areas of contemporary pertinence in the text itself and the body of rabbinic interpretation that grew up around it. (Interestingly, both authors make greater use of rabbinic commentaries, as compiled by Nehama Leibowitz in her invaluable studies on the Pentateuch, than does either Sarna or Fox; an incidental source of amusement in reading these two books is to observe Walzer and Wildavsky citing the same passages from the Midrash to wholly discrepant purposes.)

Michael Walzer, a professor of social science at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton and a member of the editorial board of the socialist quarterly *Dissent*, portrays the exodus cycle as "a paradigm of revolutionary politics," examining its events in the light of their significance in Western radical thought, from Savonarola and the English Puritans to today's civil-rights activists, Marxist historians, and liberation theologians. He pays particularly close attention to three episodes or themes in Exodus most pertinent to latter-day revolutionaries: the problem of "the slave mentality" (people who do not want to be liberated but cry out instead for the fleshpots of Egypt); the motif of "the promised land," whose inevitable shortcomings will be a permanent temptation to false utopianism; and finally the incident of the golden calf, in whose aftermath the Levites, at Moses's command, kill 3,000 of Israel's most obdurate idolaters in what Walzer classifies as a prototype of the revolutionary vanguard's periodic purging of counterrevolutionaries.

After running the gamut of radical possibilities in Exodus, Walzer concludes with an attack on right-wing or religious-Zionist readings of the book, asserting that Exodus is really a humane account of reformist hopes and ideals whose primary message is that although "things are not what they might be," we can get to the promised land "by joining together and marching."

Exodus and Revolution is lively, clever, and full of felicitous insights, but it must be said that Walzer's enterprise is a dubious one. To begin with, Walzer ostentatiously refrains from trying to understand Exodus in its own terms. "In returning to the original text," he writes, "I make no claims about the substantive intentions of its authors and editors." Rather, he sets out to "discover its meaning in what it has meant," in this case to later generations of political activists and revolutionary theorists. Thus, if the American journalist Lincoln Steffens could find in Exodus (in Walzer's words) a "complete vindication of Leninist politics, that is of dictatorship and terror," Walzer, while careful to disso-

ciate himself from the politics themselves, would nevertheless maintain that "To locate these elements in the Exodus is not to misread the text, to impose Lenin's theory of revolution upon it." As warrant for this statement Walzer is not above citing God Himself: "We must assume, along with one of the central strands of Jewish interpretation, that He intends all the meanings that He has made us capable of understanding"—including, one presumes, those wrought by theorists implacably hostile to religion in general and to the Jews in particular.

If all readings in Walzer's eyes seem to be equal, still it emerges that some are more equal than others. Thus, he allows considerably less leeway to biblical prophets and rabbinic exegetes than he does to the Marxist Ernst Bloch. Of the prophet Ezekiel, who recollects the idolatry of Israel in Egypt, Walzer, in a rare display of "judgmentalism," asserts, "This is the wrong way to remember the house of bondage." And later Jewish commentators are applauded only when their formulations coincide with what Walzer, in a self-confessed "shameless anachronism," calls "the social-democratic view of the Exodus," or can be seized as a stick with which to beat a right-wing perspective on the disposition of the West Bank.

Even were Walzer's mingling of Maimonides and Marx more evenhanded, this treatment points to one obvious but fundamental difference between religious and political readings of the Bible. The difference can be illustrated with a simple hypothesis: if the Book of Exodus argued not for but against national independence, or urged submission to a foreign yoke—as for instance does, most explicitly, the Book of Jeremiah—we can be quite sure that the rabbis would most lovingly have attended to it nonetheless, but that neither Lincoln Steffens nor Walzer's favorite liberation theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez, would have given it the time of day.

By interpreting Exodus according to those who have used the biblical book for political—and often anti-religious—purposes, Walzer gives us on the whole a faulty picture of its teachings and world view, a picture from which God is curiously absent, in which religion is merely one activity in the Israelites' busy schedule (or else a vehicle for political indoctrination by Moses's revolutionary vanguard), and in which law takes a remote back seat to liberation. Exodus is indeed a history of liberation and of a slavish people's moral transformation, and as such it has proved a resonant inspiration to all peoples who are oppressed and enslaved. But it is no accident that the same Hebrew word refers to slavery in Egypt and service to the true God of Israel. Moreover, although Exodus rebels against the oppression of a self-deified Pharaoh, the Mosaic books give no sanction to a permanent revolt against authority,

* University of Alabama Press, 259 pp., \$25.00.

much less to Walzer's conclusion that "wherever you live, it is probably Egypt." "Thou shalt not revile the judges, nor curse the ruler of My people," is God's warning in Exodus (22:27), and the story of Korah's rebellion in the Book of Numbers offers an explicit warning against radical egalitarians who would call into question the authority of the Lord's chosen servant.

Entailed in the moral transformation of the Hebrew slaves into a holy people are the keeping of God's commandments and statutes, justice and kindness to the needy, and the strong heart necessary to vanquish a territory which, as Michael Walzer forgets, is described in the Pentateuch not just as a land of milk and honey but also, in the same breath, as a land infested with hostile and pagan nations whose utter conquest and expulsion the Lord ordains. From this "absolutist" aspect of Exodus—admittedly only one aspect of many in the biblical narrative, although all are "absolutist"—Walzer understandably recoils. For in *Exodus and Revolution* the only kind of war that is justified is revolution, and the only enemy is the enemy within.

“IF ALL the biblical Exodus were about was revolution, we would never have heard about it. For revolutions . . . are a dime-a-dozen. It is what happens afterward that matters.” Thus writes Aaron Wildavsky, professor of political science at Berkeley and author of *The Nursing Father: Moses as a Political Leader*. (The title is from Numbers 11:12, and the plaintive speaker is Moses himself: “Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them that Thou shouldst say to me, Carry them in thy bosom as a nursing father beareth the sucking child. . . ?”)

Where Michael Walzer in *Exodus and Revolution* principally stresses the liberation from Egypt, Wildavsky in *The Nursing Father* is interested instead in the kind of “regimes” that succeed the liberation. His central thesis is that Moses's system of government in the desert shifts from anarchy to “equity” (decentralized democracy) to, finally, “hierarchy,” a theocratic arrangement in which Moses receives the Laws from the Lord and a hereditary priesthood administers the central cult. In expounding upon this theory, Wildavsky provides charts and models of different “regimes” and outfits his work with such textbook-style headings as “Testing Makes Creative Conflict,” “Broadening the Pyramid of Power,” “Doing Fieldwork in the Bible,” and, in a lighter vein, “Why Me? Why Moses? Why Leadership?”

When it comes to Moses himself, Wildavsky defines his brand of leadership as one that capitalizes upon failure, that inheres in a loving and self-effacing identification of leader with led, and that emphasizes continuity. Moses constantly strives to instill in Israel habits of godliness, justice, autonomy, and perseverance that will survive his own demise and will fire succeeding genera-

tions. So it is that the last book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy, consists wholly of Moses's “Farewell Address” to his troops, recounting the experiences they have undergone together, repeating to them God's teachings, conferring authority on his deputy Joshua, instructing Israel how to carry on after his death and how to govern the land he has been barred from entering.

Wildavsky's union of Scripture and political science results in a mongrel that is at first sight rather unprepossessing. It seems unlikely that a layman interested in learning more about the role of Moses in the Bible would have much to gain from an approach that emphasizes institutionalization of regimes, theories of crisis management, and pyramids of power. Nor, on the other hand, does Wildavsky effectively make his case for Moses's style of management as a model for present-day bosses. Yet once one gets past the jargon and the charts one discovers in *The Nursing Father* a painstaking reading of biblical events and heroes, attentive to the word and spirit of biblical narrative and faithful to the larger precepts that animate rabbinic Judaism. Very much a quick-study's discovery of the Bible, *The Nursing Father* stands in contrast to Walzer's more learned and elegantly synthesized book by its enthusiasm, humor, and free-fall theorizing, as well as by its occasional nonsense and, distressingly, its abundant errors of transcription and attribution. But it is also alight with an understanding sympathy for Moses and his people Israel and attuned to the few fundamentals which guide the Exodus history: that God brought the Israelites out of Egypt in order to win them to His teaching, that biblical law sanctifies creation and confirms divinely-ordained boundaries, and that “obedience to God is the prerequisite to orderly social relations.” Such homely but essential reminders from the precincts of political science one can only greet with pleasure and gratitude.

BY NOW a fairly clear sense should have emerged of those elements or themes in Exodus which have attracted modern scholars: law, liberation, leadership, the commemoration of history, and, not least, the forging of the Jewish nation, a nation indelibly and waywardly idiosyncratic from its very inception. And in addition to these themes, which scholars like Sarna, Walzer, and Wildavsky have in their various ways derived from Exodus, there is the intrinsic interest manifested by a critic like Everett Fox in the text itself as a consciously and masterfully crafted work of art, replete with drama, searingly vivid tableaux and imagery, an elegant structure, highly wrought literary language, and a profound psychological realism.

That Exodus should attract the attention of writers whose interest in the book is essentially secular is hardly a new phenomenon (one need only cite Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*). What

is different about these most recent works is that each, including Walzer's, pays the deepest respect to the biblical text, to its unity and even, to an extent, its authority. After 200 years of secular unbelief, in which the most advanced biblical scholarship has been directed toward proving the Hebrew Bible a corrupt, derivative, and unhistorical jumble of ritual and legend, it might appear that the climate of opinion is changing. Certainly, the questions which these contemporary scholars and laymen bring to the Hebrew Scriptures are strikingly other than those posed by their 19th- and early 20th-century forebears. Where historical critics asked from what disparate slivers was the Bible assembled, our contemporary commentators ask instead what it means. This search for meaning, whether sociological, political, or literary, assumes a wholeness of biblical purpose and vision which itself marks an advance over the position of previous generations.

Yet for all this, it would be a mistake to conclude that a true restoration of biblical authority is in the wings. On the contrary, it is only because the overthrow of the Bible as divine revelation has been so complete that today's critics may be willing to grant the Hebrew Scriptures some vestigial half-life, some spectral and partial reincarnation. C.S. Lewis, the great literary scholar and Christian apologist, addressed the phenomenon of the Bible-as-literature, or as-political-science, or

as-philosophy, or as-whatever-it-was-manifestly-not-intended-to-be, in an essay of 1950. "A sacred book," Lewis wrote,

is like a king dethroned. Toward either of them there arises in well-disposed minds a chivalrous compunction. One would like to concede everything except the thing really at issue. Having supported the deposition, one would wish to make it clear that one had no personal malice. Just because you cannot countenance a restoration, you are anxious to speak kindly of the old gentleman in his personal capacity—to praise his fund of anecdotes or his collection of butterflies. I cannot help thinking that when a critic old enough to remember the Bible in its power prophesies for it a great future as literature, he is unconsciously swayed by similar motives. But such courtesies will not preserve it. Neither the Bible nor those who still read it as believers invite them; and the generation which is now growing up will disregard them.

One suspects that it is *only* as God's word that the Hebrew Bible, "remorselessly and continuously sacred," to quote Lewis again, has ever enjoyed or can ever fully enjoy the life for which it is meant. A secularized Bible, read as political theory, as history, or as fiction, and hence ever in competition with Rousseau, Thucydides, or *Madame Bovary*, is in much the same position as a one-armed man: it can pack a mean punch, but it cannot lift heavenward.

Anthony Eden & the Decline of Britain

Owen Harries

THE catastrophic decline of Great Britain is one of the central events of the 20th century. As the United States in many respects now occupies the place held by Britain when the century began, it is an event that Americans should find worthy of some reflection. Should they wish to contemplate a life that embodies that collapse and casts some light on its dismal progress, they could do considerably worse than to settle on that of Anthony Eden, now set out in a full-scale biography by Robert Rhodes James.*

Appropriately for the purpose of such contemplation, Eden was born in 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, an event that symbolized British power at its zenith. The vast edifice of the British empire extended over all the continents. Britain's navy dominated the seas, as its merchant ships dominated the world's trade. Its diplomatic prestige and influence were unrivaled. While the United States had recently overtaken it industrially, and Germany drawn equal, Britain's foreign trade was still nearly as large as that of those two countries combined and its overseas investments were huge. London was the most important political, financial, and cultural center of the world.

By the time Eden died in 1977, all this had vanished: the possessions, the power, the prosperity, the prestige. Apart from a few pathetic remnants, nothing survived of the empire. Internationally, Britain was a second-rate power, and what influence it still had on the great questions was largely dependent on a "special relationship" with the United States that increasingly lacked substance. It was a country racked by industrial conflict, social decay, class and racial tension. The per-capita income of the British was one of the lowest in non-Communist Europe and the country's economic performance was abysmal. As Eden lay dying, James Callaghan's Labor government was negotiating the largest loan ever made to a country by the International Monetary Fund, in a desperate effort to prevent the collapse of sterling.

In the intervening years, Anthony Eden played

a prominent part in Britain's affairs, and in a curious way his personal career and experience reflected closely the vicissitudes of his country's fortunes. Born into the landed aristocracy and brought up on a great and particularly beautiful estate on which his family had lived since the 12th century, he saw that estate destroyed and sold during his lifetime, as a result of gross financial irresponsibility. (The main culprit was his mother, who sustained a public reputation for outstanding generosity by giving away things she did not own and borrowing at ruinous rates of interest. His father, Sir William Eden, was a man of varied and considerable talent whom many people considered mad. From him Anthony inherited a fine taste for paintings and a vile temper.) Although Anthony Eden always appeared a model of what was fashionable and elegant, due to his mother's pathological extravagance he was comparatively poor throughout his career. When he resigned from the Prime Ministership in 1957, in the wake of the Suez crisis, he did not even own a house, and his friends had to rally around to help him achieve some sort of financial security.

During his lifetime Britain fought in two world wars from beginning to end and emerged victorious on each occasion. Eden participated with conspicuous success in both wars. In the Great War he fought in France as an infantry officer for two-and-a-half years, won the Military Cross, and still only twenty, became the youngest brigade major in the British army. In World War II he was a political leader second only to Churchill in importance: Secretary for War during Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain; Foreign Secretary, leader of the House of Commons, and de facto deputy Prime Minister after that. But for both country and man the price of success was heavy. For Britain, the blood and treasure expended and the social dislocations wrought by war greatly hastened and intensified the process of decline. As for Eden, he lost two brothers and a son, as well as a marriage and perhaps his health, in the conflicts. For both country and politician, the outward appearance of success continued for a period after serious decline had set in, and for both the lingering illusion of greatness was shattered and

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reality cruelly brought home by the same event: the Suez crisis of 1956.

AFTER a conventional education at Eton and Oxford (where he graduated with first-class honors in Oriental Languages), Anthony Eden entered public life in 1923 as the Conservative Member of Parliament for Warwick and Leamington, a position he retained for the next twenty-three years. He came in at a crucial turning point in modern British politics, just as Stanley Baldwin's long ascendancy over the Conservative party was beginning and as Labor was displacing the once great Liberal party as the Conservatives' main rival for power.

Immediately following what historians now call the "Age of Baldwin"—it extended from 1922 to 1940 and included Neville Chamberlain's period as leader—the verdict on Baldwin's stewardship was very severe. Since then there have been efforts to revise that verdict in a favorable direction, and certainly Baldwin did have some formidable qualities. He was a great party manager, a clever and ruthless political tactician, sensitive and intuitive as an interpreter of the mood of the British people, and an eloquent articulator of their idealized sense of themselves. But when all this has been granted, the main charge against Baldwin—the charge of dangerous mediocrity—stands. He was indolent and passive in his response to the major substantive questions of the day (even his most sympathetic biographers concede that he "believed that it was rarely possible to solve problems"); he maneuvered among the prevailing forces without attempting to shape or direct them; and both by temperament and from political calculation he set such a value on consensus that timely, decisive action became virtually impossible. (Edward VIII, with an unexpected wit inspired no doubt by extreme dislike, said that Baldwin "spoke like a Gallup poll.")

In a sense, Baldwin was mediocre on purpose and on principle. One way of thinking about the non-Labor politics of England between the wars is in terms of a contest between the brilliant iconoclasts who believed that bold and far-reaching measures were necessary to restore the country to its greatness and prevent the rise of socialism, and the stolid party men whose main concern was to keep the iconoclasts (and particularly Lloyd George) out of power and to preserve the Conservative party. The latter, refusing to recognize the patent evidence of structural decline, believed that sound Tory government would be enough to restore the "normalcy" of prewar days; the former, believing that the existing order was fundamentally threatened, thought in terms of a Grand Coalition and, if necessary, exceptional action.

Lloyd George, together with Churchill, Birkenhead, Balfour, and Austin Chamberlain, had converted the wartime coalition into an anti-socialist one in 1919, and had come within an ace of gain-

ing the permanent control over the Tory party that would have institutionalized and perpetuated the arrangement. Baldwin came to the leadership as a result of a reaction against that venture and his implicit mandate was to prevent its repetition.

It was a mandate he could carry out with conviction. He had a profound distrust of brilliance and boldness, and throughout his career fear and hatred of Lloyd George were among the principal motivating forces in his calculations. In this contest one might, with some license, say that the apparently plodding Baldwin played Stalin to Lloyd George's Trotsky and Churchill's Bukharin, and with the same result.* Baldwin won hands down. The two authentic political geniuses that Britain has produced in the 20th century spent nearly all of the interwar years, years in which the crisis facing the country called for leadership of the highest quality, out of power: Lloyd George never held office again after 1922, while Churchill was restricted to five years as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1925 to 1929 (a brilliant stroke, this, on Baldwin's part: not only did it avoid the danger of having both Lloyd George and Churchill together on the back benches at a time when Baldwin had not yet consolidated his position, but it also put Churchill in the one great office of state for which he was utterly unsuited).

It is interesting, not only in terms of what it tells about Eden but because of the light it casts on the basis of Baldwin's ascendancy, that despite his soon-to-be-acquired image as a young cavalier of British politics and his later close relationship with Churchill (often, and wrongly, described as "filial"), Eden was firmly on Baldwin's side in this contest. He had the strongest admiration for Baldwin, and his admiration was repaid by friendship, advice, and patronage. Toward Lloyd George, on the other hand, Eden was unrelentingly hostile throughout his career, while he had a strong distrust of Churchill that did not entirely end until after the latter became Prime Minister in 1940.

Partly the hostility and distrust had their origins in the trenches of the Western Front and reflected an infantry's officer's animus (vividly expressed in Eden's diary entries at the time) toward those political leaders responsible for the conduct of a most bloody war. But the war experience worked in Baldwin's favor in a deeper sense than that. Those who had been through it were much more drawn to his vision, however vague, of social reconciliation, compromise, and government based

* The ranking implicit in this analogy may puzzle some. But as between Lloyd George and Churchill, there is no doubt that the former was the dominant partner. Lord Boothby tells the story of a meeting between the two when Lloyd George had been out of power for several years while Churchill still held high office. Asked how the meeting had gone, Churchill, a "hard look" coming over his face, replied: "Within five minutes the old relationship between us was completely reestablished. The relationship between Master and Servant. And I was the Servant."

on robust common sense than they were to the combativeness and volatility that seemed synonymous with the very names of Lloyd George and Churchill. Moreover, those of the upper classes who, like Eden, had seen and shared the experience of the ordinary soldier in the trenches, were likely to have emerged with a deep respect for the British workingman and no stomach for class warfare or ruthless reforms involving further sacrifices on his part, however strong the case for them might be.

IN HIS recent book on Baldwin, Roy Jenkins identifies three great issues that dominated British politics during the interwar years: the thrust for power of organized labor; the country's continuing industrial decline; and the rise of the dictators. On the first, Eden, following Baldwin, believed that the wisest strategy was one of accommodation and assimilation. The Labor party should be treated with respect and given a fair chance to prove itself a legitimate player in the country's political life. This was by no means a unanimous view among Conservatives at the time. Many took Labor's avowedly socialist ideology seriously and saw it as a deadly threat to liberty and the social order. This view was to persist for some time; those who held it tended to believe that the fight against Labor was different in kind from earlier party conflicts and that, within the limits of the constitution, there should be no compromise.

Over the years Baldwin has generally been praised as farseeing and sensible on this one issue, and credited with facilitating Labor's successful incorporation into the body politic. But by today the cumulative effects of that incorporation—large-scale nationalization, a huge growth in public spending and government powers, the rise of militant unionism and of neutralist and quasi-pacifist attitudes toward defense and foreign policy—renders that judgment debatable. Perhaps, indeed, in the last resort there was no realistic alternative to the policy he adopted. But it is at least plausible that had a policy of firm opposition to socialism been combined with a more energetic and imaginative effort to restore the vitality of the economy and deal with urgent social problems, a healthier Britain might have resulted.

As far as Eden was concerned, the position he took on this issue—the fact that he generally scorned partisan politics and invariably showed courtesy and respect toward his Labor opponents—contributed much to the remarkable bipartisan popularity he enjoyed until nearly the end of his career.* What made Eden popular in the country, however, also contributed to persistent doubts about him in the inner circles of the Conservative party, where many suspected, with some justification as events were to show, that he lacked the ruthlessness and the taste for political struggle that make a successful leader.

As for the second of Roy Jenkins's three great issues—what to do about the disastrous industrial decline of the country—there is not much to be said about Eden's views because, in common with nearly all his political contemporaries, he did not have serious ones. (Lloyd George and, sad to say, Oswald Mosley before he turned fascist came nearest to being exceptions.) Early on in his political career he picked up the good phrase, "a property-owning democracy," and for the rest of his life he tended to fall back on it when economic and social questions came up. But he never made a serious attempt to develop it or to explore its implications and requirements. Throughout his career, and despite the fact that they loomed ever larger as that career progressed, Eden remained remarkably ignorant about domestic issues in general and economic ones in particular. As he approached the political pinnacle this was to worry him increasingly and undermine his self-confidence. In a wartime diary entry contemplating his future he was to write: "I do not feel confidence in myself as No. 1 at home. . . . I do not know enough of economics."

FROM the beginning Eden's main interest was in foreign policy, and it is in relation to the third great issue—how to respond to the rise of the dictators—that he is most interesting. In 1931, a combination of hard work, ability, charm, and loyalty to Baldwin got him appointed junior minister for Foreign Affairs in the newly formed coalition national government. Under two weak ministers—first the vacillating Sir John Simon and then Sir Samuel ("Slippery Sam") Hoare—his reputation and influence advanced rapidly. At the end of 1935, still only thirty-eight, he became Foreign Secretary, and from shortly after the Italian invasion of Abyssinia began until just before Hitler marched into Austria he was a key figure on the European scene. In February 1938, he resigned dramatically in protest against both the conduct and content of foreign policy as practiced by Neville Chamberlain, who had recently taken over as Prime Minister from Baldwin. From then until the outbreak of war he was on the back benches, the acknowledged leader of a group of twenty or so Conservatives who were critical of government policy. Known as the "Eden Group" or, to their enemies, as the "Glamor

* As a boy growing up in a South Wales mining community which registered the largest Labor majorities in the country and where, even in wartime, Churchill was routinely jeered when he appeared on a newsreel, I was vaguely aware that while the prevailing local view was that Aneurin Bevan's description of Tories as "lower than vermin" was not unreasonable, the handsome young Foreign Secretary was regarded as something of an exception. It has to be recorded, alas, that this regard was not reciprocated on Eden's part. After a visit to South Wales early in his political career, he wrote in his diary: ". . . Swansea a terrible place . . . I do not like the Welsh. Undersized little humbugs with radical instincts."

Boys," they included Harold Macmillan, Duff Cooper, and the future Lord Salisbury.

Eden's evolution during this period is instructive. It illuminates both the strengths and weaknesses of what might be called "Foreign Office realism." It also helps make comprehensible the difficulty that even highly intelligent and honorable men found in groping toward sound policies, at a time when the slaughter of the Great War was still a recent memory—the year in which Eden became Foreign Secretary was exactly the same distance in time from the Battle of the Somme as 1987 is from the Tet Offensive—and when the problem of dealing with totalitarian dictators was still a novel one.

When he came to office in 1931, Eden had no coherent, thought-out position on foreign policy. It was to be a case of learning on the job. From 1932 to 1934—that is, just as Hitler was assuming power in Germany—he was absorbed in the World Disarmament Conference in Geneva, at which he quickly became the dominant British figure. In a speech in March 1933, Churchill denounced the conference as "a solemn and prolonged farce" and famously thanked God for the existence of the French army. But, then as now, such thinking was generally considered perverse and alarmist, and the conference an event of overriding importance. At a time when it was conventional wisdom that the outbreak of war in 1914 had resulted from an arms race, and that aerial warfare meant that another war would destroy civilization, it was also an article of faith that disarmament, or what we would now call arms control, combined with collective security organized through the League of Nations, was the way to preserve peace. It has proved a durable faith.

Eden began by accepting all this and, being a serious (and ambitious) man, he proceeded to work hard to give it substance. Unlike most of his colleagues, he was thorough in mastering the details and arguments, fertile in drawing up proposals, and skilled and resourceful as a negotiator. (He was undoubtedly the most "professional" minister to be involved in British foreign policy in recent times.) James's biography, too anxious to make the case for Eden, is particularly weak in its treatment of the disarmament conference. It hints repeatedly that had opportunities been seized and Eden been better supported, it could have been a success, and makes the ludicrous claim that he was "the one man who actually made the League work." In reality there was no possibility of success and the lesson of the conference was the simple but fundamental one that the question of arms control is always subordinate to the question of the settlement of political conflicts. Even without Hitler, the insurmountable problems of reconciling the French concern to obtain security guarantees, the German demand for equality of status, and the British desire both to maintain freedom of action and to assuage a mis-

placed sense of guilt over the Versailles Treaty ruled out the possibility of progress through the mere devising of disarmament formulas and schedules. With Hitler's arrival the whole thing became an utter nonsense.

But for Eden the disarmament conference was nevertheless a valuable education. Precisely because he took it seriously and gave it his best effort (instead of merely using it to evade and delay the making of hard decisions, as many others did), he was able to draw the right conclusions when the conference failed. He never again put real faith or effort into disarmament. Similarly, when the attempt to impose collective sanctions against Italy at the time of its invasion of Abyssinia collapsed—an attempt in which, again, he played a leading role—Eden drew the right conclusion about the League of Nations.

THUS his education proceeded. But it was a slow process, and in dealing with Hitler and Mussolini time was a wasting asset. Eden's crucial weakness was that, despite his application and professionalism, he lacked an adequate interpretive framework with which to confront the realities of the 1930's. Possessing this, Churchill was able to penetrate to the essence of the situation very early on the basis of much less information than was available to Eden as a minister; lacking it, Eden had to learn the hard, slow way, by bitter experience. Two related features of intellectual makeup particularly hindered him in this respect (as they continue to hinder many others): the fact that he was temperamentally incapable of appreciating the important role of ideology, symbols, and rhetoric in modern mass politics; and the inclination, reinforced by his professionalism, to approach international politics as a closed system operating in terms of its own logic and essentially unaffected by the internal character of regimes.

Eden's indifference and insensitivity to ideology and rhetoric were a major weakness even in the context of British politics and set serious limitations on his potential as a democratic leader. (Faced with a draft of a speech, James tells us, he was inclined first to strike out any memorable or original phrase and substitute a well-tryed cliché, which makes it unsurprising that although he lived through the most stirring and dramatic of times he never uttered a single phrase or passage that stays in the mind.) But in dealing with the totalitarians it was a much greater handicap. It meant that he lacked a vital tool for interpreting the dynamics of their behavior and, in its absence, was forced to fall back on judging by demeanor and manner, at which he was as bad as most other Western leaders. On his first meeting with Stalin, when the Great Terror was already under way, Eden was struck by his "pragmatic approach" and commented, "It was easy to forget that I was talking to a party man, no one could

have been less doctrinaire." Hitler on first acquaintance he found "quiet and rather shy" and he wrote to his wife, "Dare I confess it? I rather liked him." When it came to understanding the behavior of the dictators, the absence of an appreciation of ideology usually meant a resort to such unilluminating and inadequate characterizations as "gangsters," "madmen," or even "spoilt children."

As for the inclination to think of the international system as a closed one in which positional factors were decisive and the internal composition of the actors relatively unimportant (what is sometimes described as the "billiard-ball" view of international politics), then as now one of its most unfortunate consequences was the tendency to ignore moral differences and assume an essential equivalence of interest and behavior. Thus, as between France and Germany, Eden along with most other British politicians sometimes appeared more concerned to act as impartial umpire than as the ally of the democracy and the adversary of the dictatorship.

DESPITE these handicaps, Eden's understanding of the dictators grew and his conviction that they must be opposed hardened. The main instrument of his enlightenment was the increasingly blatant and arrogant behavior of the dictators themselves, though the failure of this factor to convert others indicates that on its own it was not enough. Eden had other strengths that supplemented it and helped compensate for his blind spots. First he had an aristocrat's very strong sense of dignity and honor, both of his country's and his own. Such a sense may seem an inadequate piece of equipment with which to confront 20th-century totalitarianism, but there are worse ones. It meant that Eden had a low tolerance for the treaty violations, broken promises, and systematic lying that were the dictators' stock-in-trade, and was affronted by them in a way that more pliant and cynical politicians were not. While Eden was an outstandingly good negotiator, he did not regard everything—and certainly not the honor of his country—as negotiable, as Chamberlain came close to doing in the end.*

Second, the long-established British Foreign Office tradition of approaching European politics in terms of the doctrine of the balance of power, definitively enunciated by Eyre Crowe at the beginning of the century, worked against the acceptance of appeasement and the flaccid acceptance of "understanding" as adequate goals of policy. Stigmatized as "Foreign Office thinking," that tradition was in bad odor in most intellectual and political circles in the 1930's. It was rejected as outdated and dangerous by League of Nations internationalists, pacifists, the Left, and "practical" men of the Right. But in the 1930's the tradition was still strong in the Foreign Office, and Eden, a minister from 1931 on and one who respected his

department and was respected by it, was constantly exposed to the kind of thinking that it produced.

Increasingly he came to accept and embody that thinking. It was a tradition that had its limitations—it was not of much use as a source of enlightenment on the nature of totalitarianism or the causes and scope of Nazi Germany's expansionism, and therefore was of little predictive assistance. But it provided well-tested guidelines for *responding* to the international manifestations of that expansionism once it was well under way, and it taught that even the fate of faraway countries about which one might know little could be vital to international stability and one's own security.

Together these two influences were strong enough to turn Eden against appeasement, though not strong enough to enable him to see with Churchill's clarity that only unyielding firmness, even to the point of being prepared to fight, could possibly curb Hitler's ambition. Churchill's clear vision was aided by the fact that he was out of office. As Foreign Secretary, Eden carried an enormous burden of work and had to attend to the myriad issues that concerned a great imperial power. He had to cope with a relentless flow of information and make difficult decisions under pressure, in the process putting his name to hundreds of pieces of paper that he did not write or even always have the time to scrutinize closely. As a member of a government in which his views did not prevail, he also had to consider carefully on what issues he would fight and on which concede or compromise. It is therefore not surprising that one can make differing cases as to how resolute or compromising Eden was in relation to appeasement.

A few years ago an English historian, David Carlton, argued that Eden's policy differences with Chamberlain were quite limited (relating mainly to the treatment of Mussolini) and that political ambition and ill-health were major factors in his resignation. James, who conducts a running argument against Carlton throughout his book, rejects that view and presents Eden as a firm opponent of appeasement. Probably both are guilty of exaggerating their cases, though Carlton more so than James. There *was* an element of ambivalence in Eden's position that probably

* On occasion, and especially when he was rattled, this side of Eden could manifest itself in unattractive displays of vanity and irascibility. But there was nothing shallow about his sense of honor. One striking example, revealed by James for the first time, occurred when he became Foreign Secretary for the third time in 1951. As the Mossadeq crisis was in progress in Iran, he decided to sell his Anglo-Iranian shares when their price was at rock bottom. If he had held on to them, they would have made him a rich man, but as it was he took an appalling loss that he could ill afford. In terms of British law and convention there was absolutely no need for him to do this, and Churchill was horrified when he heard about it.

went beyond the compromises that he had to make as long as he stayed in the government. He clung to the hope that war could be avoided by a combination of strength and diplomacy (a hope that was shared by the British people, and which helps explain his extraordinary popularity in the country at the time). He did not close the door entirely on some flexibility in dealing with Hitler. But unlike Chamberlain he put much greater emphasis on firmness than on accommodation.

EDEN's ambivalence as well as some of his central character traits, are apparent in the circumstances of his resignation and its aftermath. He resigned because of his increasing opposition to the direction of foreign policy under Chamberlain, and also because foreign policy was being run more and more from the Prime Minister's office with Eden and the Foreign Office ignored. Chamberlain's determined wooing of Mussolini (largely carried on through what would now be known as back-channels, including a sister-in-law domiciled in Rome); the sending of Lord Halifax to talk to Hitler at Berchtesgaden; and Chamberlain's brusque discouragement, without consulting Eden, of a tentative initiative by Roosevelt to draw attention to the deteriorating international situation all contributed to Eden's decision. (Chamberlain had a strong dislike of Americans; he regarded them as "a nation of cads.")

Eden's resignation, particularly as he had been the object of virulent attacks in the German and Italian press, was a major political event. Within a few days he received over 6,000 letters of support, an extraordinary number at a time when organized write-ins were unknown. Nothing, however, conveys better the impact of Eden's resignation and the standing he had achieved by this time than Churchill's moving account of his own reactions to the news. When Eden had become Foreign Secretary, Churchill had written to his wife, "I think you will now see what a lightweight Eden is." But by 1938 his opinion had changed completely:

Late on the night of February 20 a telephone message reached me as I sat in my old room at Chartwell (as I often sit now) that Eden had resigned. I must confess that my heart sank, and for a while the dark waters of despair overwhelmed me. . . . During all the war soon to come and in its darkest times I never had trouble in sleeping. . . . But now, on the night of February 20, 1938, and on this occasion only, sleep deserted me. From midnight till dawn I lay in my bed consumed by emotions of sorrow and fear. There seemed one strong young figure standing up against long, dismal, drawling tides of drift and surrender, of wrong measures and feeble impulses. My conduct of affairs would have been different from his in various ways; but he seemed to me at this moment to embody

the life-hope of the British nation. . . . Now he was gone. . . .

Coming from a man implacably opposed to appeasement, and well informed about the inner politics of the government, this reaction and the tribute it contains are the most convincing refutation of those who impugn Eden's motives and question his record in opposing the dictators.

Eden's resignation was in many ways his finest hour. For a moment he seemed destined—in terms of his conviction, his popularity, his age—to become the outstanding leader of his country in the coming crisis and perhaps beyond. But that moment slipped away, and he never really lived up to its promise, either immediately afterward or later.

While the act of resignation showed him at his best, his subsequent behavior quickly exposed his shortcomings as a political actor. If, immediately after his resignation, he had followed Churchill's urging to do "full justice to your cause" and Lloyd George's more laconic advice "not to be too good a boy," it is possible that Eden could have brought down the government. He could certainly have made himself *the* central figure in the opposition to appeasement, more influential, because more widely trusted, than Churchill himself.* But Eden did not, perhaps could not, play it that way. The sense of honor that had been an important factor in leading to his resignation also prevented him from ruthlessly driving home his advantage after he had done so. He declined to make public the full case for his resignation. He muted and scrupulously qualified his criticism of Chamberlain. He refused, partly on Baldwin's advice and partly because of his own reservations, to make common cause with Churchill and his small group.

In his biography, James develops the case that, finally convinced that war was inevitable, Eden was constrained from adopting a more aggressive attitude toward Chamberlain by his belief that strengthening national unity in preparation for the struggle was now an overriding priority. Perhaps so. In any event, while he made some strong, well-reasoned speeches, Eden did not seize the moment, and within the Eden Group those who looked to him for decisive leadership were left puzzled and disappointed. Despite James's protestations, in contemplating Eden's performance at this time it is hard to keep from one's mind Lady Violet Bonham Carter's complaints about his "implacable fairness" and "tepid impartiality," and that well-known summary of Austin Chamberlain's career: "He always played the game and always lost it." For the next decade and a half

* As it was, a poll taken by the British Institute of Public Opinion in April 1939 asking whom people would like to replace Chamberlain gave Eden 38 percent of the votes. His nearest rivals, Churchill and Halifax, got 7 percent each.

Eden's role was to be not that of leader but of Churchill's principal lieutenant.

DURING World War II, Churchill kept control of all aspects of grand strategy, including foreign policy, in his own hands, and Eden's role was a subordinate one. But it was a special and privileged sort of subordination, involving a great mutual affection and trust (remarkable given their earlier attitudes toward each other), much exasperation, and, not infrequently, violent disagreements. In the eyes of many at the time, the most important function performed by Eden was that of exercising some restraint and control over Churchill's wayward genius, which could alarm even as it inspired. When, exhausted and dispirited in the middle of the war, Eden was momentarily attracted to the idea of becoming viceroy of India and Churchill agreed on the grounds that it was essential to "save India," the King instantly vetoed the idea by saying that he must stay "to have some influence over Winston."

The most interesting and revealing aspect of Eden's wartime work is that relating to the Soviet Union. When that country entered the war in 1941, there was a problem. For while Churchill promptly welcomed Stalin as an ally against the Nazis, he was conspicuously on the record as having denounced over the years "the foul baboonery of Bolshevism." Eden, on the other hand, had comparatively good relations with the Soviet leaders, whether, as James suggests, because they respected his professionalism or because they sensed an exploitable weakness in his makeup. In any event, he played an important part in conducting relations with Moscow, particularly in the earlier years of the war. As in the 1930's, he continued to be unduly influenced by manner and atmospherics and to show ambivalence. Writing of the Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Moscow in 1943, James recounts with evident approval:

Although Eden considered Stalin's reluctance to look him in the eye, even when shaking hands, and his whole demeanor to be "creepy and sinister," and disliked the Soviet system more on every visit, there was a core of mutual regard between these two very different men.

During the years 1941 to 1945, the balance of advantage as between the Western democracies and Moscow shifted steadily from the former to the latter. At the beginning, with the Soviets reeling under the furious German attack, the cards were all with the West; gradually, as the military contest became more even, Stalin's hand strengthened; finally, as victory became certain, his position as far as Eastern and Central European issues were concerned became enormously powerful. The interesting thing is that the broad reactions of Churchill and Eden to this progression ran exactly counter to each other. When the advan-

tage was clearly with the West, Churchill tended to take a robust, unaccommodating, and suspicious attitude toward the Soviet Union. Eden, however, was eager at this time to be a good ally and to be forthcoming toward Stalin and Molotov. He complained that the Prime Minister was becoming "dangerously anti-Russian," and when Churchill lectured him on the threat that a victorious Russia would present after the war, his response according to his diary was:

I admitted that all this might be true but argued that only possible basis for a policy was to try to get on terms with Russia. In view of past history suspicion only too easily bred suspicion.

By 1944 their positions were substantially reversed. Faced with now-dominant Soviet power in the East and having failed to get Roosevelt to take a firm position on Poland and other Central European questions, Churchill now became anxious to strike the best bargain possible with Stalin before the Western negotiating position deteriorated still further. But his notorious "naughty document" proposing a division of the Balkans in terms of proportions of Soviet and British interests and his position on Poland represented no change of mind about the Soviet Union, only about what was possible. Eden, on the other hand, swung the other way. Having earlier been anxious to be accommodating to Stalin, he was now appalled at Churchill's cold-bloodedness and Roosevelt's indifference. As the Soviet position strengthened, it was he who increasingly harped on the ominous danger it posed, pressed for a firmer stand on the Polish question, and complained that Churchill was not looking ahead to the post-war situation.

THE records of the two men in dealing with Stalin are strikingly similar to their records in facing Hitler in the 1930's. In both cases, Churchill saw the problem early and urged that it be dealt with while the balance of advantage was still favorable. When his advice was not heeded, he accepted the consequences and prepared to deal with them. In the 1930's that meant preparing for war; in the 1940's getting as good a settlement as a weak bargaining position allowed in readiness for the postwar confrontation. Likewise, in both instances, Eden was slow to recognize the problem, put his faith in negotiation and accommodation when the British position was strong, and then, belatedly, began pressing for a much firmer policy when that position had deteriorated. Both were men of strong feelings, but Churchill's were governed by a ruthless understanding of the logic of power and of the essential character of totalitarian regimes, while Eden's acted as a substitute for such understanding. For him, resolute action was advanced as an alternative to power that had been allowed to slip away, not as something that flowed from its secure pos-

session; and honor and good faith seemed to be free-floating entities, not things realistically wedded to capability and interest.

As the war drew to an end, there was one terrible question on which Eden and Churchill unfortunately did not disagree, and on which Eden showed no inclination to reject the logic of realpolitik. This was the question of the forced repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Soviet subjects—some prisoners of war, some who had been used by the Nazis as slave labor, some who had fought with the German army—to the Soviet Union and, almost always, to their death. Shamefully, James disposes of this episode in a single page which is taken up by a brisk, and singularly unfeeling, refutation of the charges made against Eden by Nikolai Tolstoy, in his book *The Secret Betrayal 1944-1947*. Tolstoy is indeed less than fair to Eden when he writes:

This was no cynical policy of realpolitik. Eden and his adversaries were not postponing an inevitable confrontation; they sincerely believed in Stalin's goodwill. Eden himself felt for Stalin strong affection and admiration. These sentiments were shared by his permanent officials. . . .

It was in terms of realism and as a part of the overall bargaining process—when the future of Greece and the speedy repatriation of British prisoners of war who had fallen into Russian hands, in particular, were matters of concern—that the British gave way on this issue. And at the time Eden had long since ceased to feel anything approaching affection for Stalin. Moreover, the decision was not one taken personally by Eden but by the Cabinet as a whole. All this having been said, however, there is something exceedingly unattractive about what Carlton describes as the “unusual . . . clarity of mind and decisiveness” that Eden showed in “supporting so unpleasant a necessity.” And some of the details Tolstoy gives of the casualness with which Eden agreed to Stalin's request for repatriation beggar understanding, even in the context of a war that required leaders to make many awful decisions.

This very selective account of Eden's second war has focused mainly on aspects where there is not much to praise, but there are others which show him in a more favorable light. He understood de Gaulle's great qualities better, and was closer to him, than any other leading Anglo-Saxon politician, and did valuable work in helping to smooth relations between him and Churchill. (Nor did de Gaulle forget; when Eden had retired and his reputation was low, he was invited to the Elysée Palace and treated as a major political figure.) Again, in Quebec in 1944 when Henry Morgenthau's idiotic plan for the pastoralization of Germany was the main order of business, and when Churchill agreed to go along with it for the sake of amity, Eden took on both the Americans and his Prime Minister in opposing it violently,

incurring Churchill's public wrath in the process. The plan was subsequently dropped. It was the very big issues that tended to expose Eden's limitations.

NINETEEN FORTY-FIVE, the year of victory, was the saddest one in Anthony Eden's life. Simon, his elder son to whom he was particularly close, was killed in action. It became clear that his marriage, floundering for many years, was finished. He was exhausted, lonely, depressed, and worried about money. He was also tired of the political life and gloomy about the prospect of continuing to live in Churchill's vast shadow (the great man had promised that once the war was over he would make way for Eden, but now he was having second thoughts). Had he been offered the Secretary Generalship of the newly founded United Nations Organization, which he had helped bring into existence, Eden would have taken it.

Although British prestige at this time was great, it was a Pyrrhic victory that had just been won. The country was exhausted and depleted. Thoroughgoing social and economic reforms of almost revolutionary proportions—the kind that had been evaded during the Age of Baldwin—seemed necessary if there was to be recovery to anything approaching previous strength. The crushing electoral victory of the Labor party held out the possibility of such major surgery.

Eden was not hostile to the new government. In his diary he frequently expressed his dislike of his own party and the belief that he would have been more at home with Labor, a belief strengthened by how congenial he had found the experience of working with Labor leaders in the wartime coalition. Unfortunately, the Labor government was to prove much more successful in the area of social reform than in that of economic growth and efficiency. It was more concerned with redistribution and equality than with productivity and the creation of incentives, and its commitment to nationalization and centralization merely succeeded in bureaucratizing the British economy, thus rendering it even less competitive and adaptive than before.

As Churchill was busy writing his memoirs, and was in any case bored by day-to-day parliamentary affairs, Eden played a leading role in the Conservative party during the period in opposition. True to his long-held views, he strongly supported and encouraged R.A.B. Butler and those who worked with him in the newly established Conservative Research Department, in their aim to reform the party along progressive lines. Butler operated on the basis of a convergence theory of party politics, and the results of his efforts were the emergence of what in current British parlance would be termed “wet” (or, in American, “caring”) conservatism, more concerned with competing with Labor to do essentially the same things than

to offer a clear alternative. The term "Butskellism," a telescoping of Butler and Gaitskell coined by the *Economist*, defined the resulting state of affairs, and it was to remain a valid one until the arrival of Margaret Thatcher as Conservative leader and the Labor party's sharp shift to the Left in the 1970's.

In foreign affairs, Eden generally approved of the policies followed by the Attlee government and had good relations with Ernest Bevin who was now Foreign Secretary. At this time he began to propound his "three pillars" view of foreign policy, which maintained that Britain's interests required it to cultivate the idea of an Atlantic Community based on the United States, the British Commonwealth, and continental Europe. Superficially this seemed an attractive formulation, at the same time appearing to integrate and balance diverse interests and allow a freedom of maneuver by the spreading of bets. In reality it represented the persistence of attitudes that were no longer appropriate and an unwillingness to make choices. It offered no guide as to how priorities were to be established among the three pillars and indeed carried the suggestion that they were of equal importance, though this was palpably false. The United States was overwhelmingly the dominant power in the world, Europe was for the moment weak but had great potential, while the Commonwealth was a shadowy and insubstantial entity whose members had little capacity or inclination for united action on large questions. If British foreign policy was to be a kind of stool resting on three such legs, it was bound to be a very unstable and badly tilted construction.

As Foreign Secretary and then Prime Minister in the 1950's, Eden proceeded to act according to this three-pillar model, and the results were unfortunate. At a crucial juncture when the move toward European integration had real momentum, and when a strong commitment by Britain, at this time still the most powerful European state both economically and politically, could have made a great difference, Eden insisted on holding back (against Macmillan's objection) on the grounds that membership in the European Economic Community would not be compatible with Britain's Commonwealth obligations. Thus Britain missed the opportunity of being a founding member of the Community and of being able to play a part in shaping its character during the early exploratory years, while the British economy was deprived of the much-needed stimulus that membership might have provided.

In his dealings with the United States, the three-pillar cast of mind encouraged Eden to indulge a presumption that circumstances did not justify and a resentment that was unwise and potentially dangerous. On a number of issues during the early 1950's—the Iran crisis, Korea, Vietnam, among others—the British government, under Eden's influence, found itself at odds with Ameri-

ca, and relations became noticeably cool. In all these instances, Eden had a case on the merits of the issue and on some of them he was clearly right. But all too often his behavior seemed to be motivated largely by a concern to emphasize British independence and to demonstrate the possession of superior skill and experience. After one such display, at the United Nations, Dean Acheson turned on him angrily, saying, "One day you will find that it never pays to win victories over your friends." Sadly and revealingly, the British reaction to this prophetic warning, as voiced by Eden's Minister of State Selwyn Lloyd, was that it was caused by personal jealousy.

As for the third pillar, the Commonwealth, there is little doubt that Eden believed in it as deeply as he was suspicious of supranational European entanglements and resentful of American power. But, as well, in offering a forum in which there was no challenger for leadership and in sustaining the memory of greatness, it served a function that was psychologically indispensable in facing decline. It is easy to ridicule the Commonwealth, but as long as expectations are kept modest and restricted to issues that mainly concern its member states, it can do useful work.* But that was not what Eden had in mind. He saw the Commonwealth as a major prop and instrument of British power on the world stage. For that purpose, it was a phantom pillar.

IN APRIL 1955, a reluctant Churchill, now over eighty, was finally persuaded to resign and Eden at last came into his inheritance. On the night before his resignation, Churchill entertained the Queen at a large dinner party. John Colville, his private secretary, has described the end of the evening when everyone had left:

He sat on his bed, still wearing his Garter, Order of Merit, and knee-breeches. For several minutes he did not speak and I, imagining that he was sadly contemplating that this was his last night at Downing Street, was silent. Then suddenly he stared at me and said with vehemence: "I don't believe Anthony can do it."

Eden was still only fifty-eight when he became Prime Minister. He was married again, to Churchill's niece, and this time happily. He had recently been the victim of a badly botched operation and his health was seriously impaired. Having once briefly been Churchill's political equal and rival, he had served fifteen years under him, waiting with a mixture of impatience and apprehension for his own chance to be Prime Minister. It took less than two years to prove Churchill right.

What destroyed him, of course, was the Suez

* Between 1975 and 1981, I attended three Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings as adviser to the Australian Prime Minister and had a chance to observe their workings closely. In comparison with the UN conferences I have attended, they were models of good sense.

crisis. There is a tragic air of inevitability about this episode. Eden contrived his own downfall just as surely as King Lear did, and if Nasser had not come along to give him the opportunity of doing so, one is left feeling that he would almost certainly have found, or created, another.

Consider the basic ingredients of the situation: a psychologically insecure Prime Minister in charge of a declining country, with both having a deep need to prove that they could still act decisively; an intense resentment of dependence on a parvenu power that had usurped their position and was now failing to display strong leadership; the fact that the finest hour of both man and country had involved standing up to a dictator; a made-to-measure confrontation with a compact-sized dictator, one significant enough to be taken seriously but not so powerful as to discourage taking him on; the threat to what was widely believed to be the "jugular vein" of the Commonwealth, an institution that had become crucial for sustaining a self-image of greatness.

To recognize these elements is not to deny that there was a sound case for responding firmly to Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal, nor is it to support the incoherent and foolish attitude (it can hardly be called a policy) that prevailed in Washington during the crisis. It is, however, to see that for Britain and Eden the same issue carried a symbolic weight that transcended that case: the weight of the mistakes of the 1930's, the still-recent glory of the war years, and the decline that had followed so cruelly after victory. The result was that a sound case led to disastrous policy. In 1936 Britain had sufficient strength to confront a dictator and refused to use it; in 1956 it had greatly diminished strength and insisted on using it, in the worst possible way.

Eden's actual handling of events provide a kind of compendium of his weaknesses. In the first place, by lack of foresight and understanding of the dynamics of the regime with which he was dealing, and in the face of opposition from Churchill and others in his party, he himself set the scene for the crisis by insisting on removing British forces from the Canal Zone in 1953-54.

His inability to recognize the importance of ideology—in this instance the strength of the American ideological commitment to self-determination and against imperialism—led him to underestimate Eisenhower's opposition to the use of force. Similarly, his ignorance of economics caused him to pay insufficient attention to the possibility and consequences of economic retaliation by an angered Washington. At home, his distaste for rhetoric and his lack of political sense contributed to the bitter division of the country and his own final isolation. In his concern to be independent and decisive, he neglected completely the importance of maintaining good communications with Britain's principal ally: incredibly, through most of September and October when the crisis was at its height, there was no British ambassador in place in Washington (Eden has been rightly criticized for acting without the support of the United States, but the more one ponders his behavior the clearer it becomes that acting without that support was in a real sense the very point and attraction of the exercise for him). Finally, having committed Britain to invasion and with the process under way, Eden's intense but brittle resolution cracked, and he failed to carry it through.

IN JANUARY 1957, Eden's long political career came to an end because of Suez. He was to live for another twenty years, and he died just as a new Conservative leader, Margaret Thatcher, was beginning her bold confrontation with the issues that had been so long evaded by her predecessors, including Eden himself.

But it may be that inadvertently Eden rendered his country a greater service with this resounding failure than he did with many of his earlier successes. All too often those had turned out to be virtuoso displays of negotiating skills that lacked real substance and lasting effect, and had served merely to disguise Britain's changing status and power in the world. Suez, however, conclusively destroyed the illusions regarding their country's capacity and standing that the British had clung to so tenaciously since World War II. And the persistence of illusions constitutes one of the greatest dangers for a country in decline.

Letter to a New Israeli

Ruth R. Wisse

DEAR B —,

Unhappy as I am that so close a friend is gone, I cannot scold you for leaving. You've done what I think is right, a word that still carries full weight with you and me. I know how much you love Jerusalem. You've told me what a good job awaits you at the university, and that you've shipped over a microwave oven for your new apartment, something your wife never enjoyed here. I also know that your sons will soon be serving in the army, how you will writhe in the toils of the Israeli bureaucracy, what a burden of problems you assume as an immigrant. I take you at your word when you say that you have left Canada for Israel only because you want to, but a hero may well be one whose desires happen to coincide with the national imperative.

You may be right that the Jews are, and will remain, a people united in dispersion. Moored as I am in Canada, I have every incentive to trust the course of my life. But a Jew within our dispersed people may also be under a particular obligation to know where he is most needed, and if he acts on that knowledge he makes us proud, if also lonelier.

Before you try to squirm out of this stentorian rhetoric about pride and heroism with some wisecrack, let me anticipate your discomfort. Mona Richman, Eliza's sister-in-law, does not share my admiration for your move. By my calculation, at just about the time you were passing through El Al security at Mirabel Airport forty-eight hours ago (no doubt impressing the agents with your elegant Hebrew), I was sitting beside this woman at the *shiva* for Eliza's mother. Mona was my schoolmate through grades one to seven at the *Folkschule*, a girl who never let on how smart she really was. After we had caught up with old times, she became my guide to the Richman family, beginning with the oldest son, Mark, a volunteer in the Israeli army, at present home on compassionate leave. Eliza had hoped that he

would come back into the family business, but the boy had just let his parents know that when he finished his army service he intended to study electrical engineering at the Technion, then settle right there, in Haifa. Mona described the boy as clever and popular, and his good looks I could confirm. "I don't understand," she confided to me, "I thought only losers go to Israel nowadays."

Isn't that a breathtaking formulation? What a treasure of received ideas in this woman's "nowadays." A true Jewish woman of the 80's, active in the synagogue, she acknowledges that the Zionist impulse was once creditable, that the Richmans' son and you, my dear loser, would have merited her respect in bygone days. Maybe she retains images of one-armed Joseph Trumpeldor on his horse, kibbutzniks raising water towers and draining the Hula swamps, haloed Ben-Gurion under Herzl's majestic portrait, proclaiming the birth of the Jewish state. After all, she herself once stood side by side with me in our blue-and-white girls' choir, piping out Zionist chestnuts. When her little soprano voice trilled "Who will build, will build a house in Tel Aviv? Who will plant, will plant a vineyard in Tel Hai?" she too must have shivered as the boys boomed their answer in voices just beginning to crack, "We, the pioneers, will build Tel Aviv. We, the *halutzim*, will cultivate Tel Hai." Her "nowadays" concedes that people of strength and ambition did once go to Israel, or would have been credited with strength and ambition for determining to live there. Had you gone east then, Mona Richman would have been at the dock, waving the Jewish flag.

You know, I actually remember how that was. In 1949 we drove to Quebec City to see my brother off on the S.S. *Tabinta*. All year long his Zionist group had met in our living room to work out the details of their trip and to hammer out a common ideology. Their arguments were so fierce I was convinced the Arabs stood no chance. My brother was a moderate, an idealist without portfolio, but the two dozen others seemed to be setting off on holy missions of their own rich invention. When Joe E., the Communist, spoke about shaping the kibbutz it reminded me of the way he drove his motorcycle: loud, fast, and recklessly. Davy F., smiling sweetly as if

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his egalitarian vision had already been realized on earth, could with his gentleness persuade an elephant to get up and dance. Tanis, a law student, opposed the agrarian romanticism of the group, insisting that they ought to be founding an urban commune. Without sponsors and at no one's urging, they were off in the first flush of statehood to demonstrate their allegiance to Israel through a long summer's volunteer work on a kibbutz, and to pledge their immigration as settlers in the years ahead.

They were so fervent, so glamorous. Their collective departure was the boldest thing I had ever known. I kept beside my bed a snapshot of my brother in a trenchcoat, against the rail of the ship, and turning toward it each morning the way pious Jews turn eastward in prayer, I pledged my own ascent. It was a curse to be five years younger than their eighteen, unable either to master the terms of discussion or to join in defending the homeland.

Still, I was not without a small share in that burst of glory. It was my final year at the *Folk-schule* before entering high school, and if we couldn't go overseas to help secure the land, at least we were busy securing the myth. The same spring my brother left for Israel our class mounted the most ambitious production the school had ever seen, a full-length drama that we students conceived, wrote, and staged by ourselves. Act 1 was silent. Through a series of frozen tableaux we showed the gradual transformation of broken refugees into illegal immigrants defying the British blockade. Figures dashed to the ground at the start became figures who kissed the ground at the end. Act 2 was a domestic scene in the kitchen of a Canadian Jewish home. The oldest son informs his parents that he is leaving for Palestine to throw in his lot with the builders of the new nation. (Lest you see my influence in this, you should know that the older sister of one of my classmates was already a member of kibbutz Eyn Hashofet near the Galilee.) In Act 3, which took a month to research, we reenacted the United Nations debate over the partition plan for Palestine. During the fateful roll-call our own hearts stopped every time the girl playing the delegate from Uruguay paused before delivering her decisive Yes. Act 4 was the inevitable siege, a Jewish settlement fighting off Arab attack in order to ensure for the nation a different future from what it had known in the past.

We were your ordinary rowdy kids: a boy gashed his head on an overhead pipe during rehearsals, and a girl forfeited her part for tickling the American delegate with a curtain rod during his key UN speech. But look what sure instincts we had. Did we know what we were doing when we dressed everyone in black for the opening act's heavy, static representation of the European past, and everyone in white for the noisy, battling finish? How about our balancing of the family

sitting around the table in Act 2 with the Family of Man around the table in Act 3—did we realize the depth of the Jewish yearning for acceptance when, changing scenes, we pulled the little table of the Jewish kitchen into the bigger circle of the United Nations? I'm struck especially by the ensemble concept of the script. There were no leading roles. Most of the play had all of us together on stage (which was also what made us so frisky). To perform the drama of modern Israel you had to draw everyone into the action because that was how we felt, united as a people, having been joined against our will in destruction, now willingly united to claim our right to live.

IN ALL these aspects the script wrote itself, pronouncing our assurance that we had emerged from darkness into light, from slavery to freedom. We were equally certain that this reversal of our national fate required our participation. Jewish youngsters—at least one in a family—would have to leave the warmth of their Canadian kitchens to help in the ongoing struggle. My brother in his actions, my class in its representation of his actions, felt the same sense of urgency.

Note *why* we had to go: to fight off the Arab attack. In Act 3 the United Nations confirmed our right to exist as a people on its national soil, but in Act 4 the Arabs continued to deny that right. The theoretical framework of partition collapsed under the real opposition of the Arabs. The Jews would not be granted their moment of historical grace after all, but would have to fight for their land the way they had once lost it, by military force. The Jewish settlement had to defend itself, to defeat the enemy, in order to guarantee a happy end.

Once the battle was over, though, and the dead laid out tenderly on the stage, our play ended with a fervent *Hatikvah*, our hymn of hope. That too, maybe that especially, was part of the myth we were trying to secure. The Arabs of our imagination were a reasonable enemy. True, they did not want to accept Jewish sovereignty in what they considered, after centuries, to be their exclusive domain. True, they would not yield without an armed struggle. Contentious among themselves, they were nevertheless prepared to join forces to push us into the sea. True, true. It would be a terrible war, with many casualties, which is why we Diaspora Jews had to provide Israel with infusions of our blood. But when we won the war, at whatever ghastly price, peace would follow like a curtain being drawn. We were illumined by hope because we thought we could, in the end, determine the outcome of the battle.

One would have thought that after the scale of Hitler's annihilation the Jews would lack the energy for military confrontation. Yet just the opposite was true. Remember your client—was his name Grodzinski?—who had fought in the

battle for the road to Jerusalem and went back all the time to visit the graves of fellow soldiers he had barely known? When you told me about him I found it hard to understand why this ill-tempered survivor of Buchenwald should have made his way to Palestine to risk the life he had gone to such lengths to preserve. On the basis of his own testimony he was not a self-sacrificing man, and to move from one sphere of death to another seemed out of character. But in the seeming similarity between the corpses of Buchenwald and the dead of Latrun lay the instructive contrast.

At Buchenwald the Jew was erased. A man raised to believe that he had been made in the image of God found that he wasn't even worth comparing to a dog. To be worth nothing, so that no work you could do, no service you could render, would hold as much value for the Germans as reducing you to dust—that was the Jew's experience at Buchenwald. The Germans meant to make it our destiny. Compared with that, war against the Arabs and the British was like returning to human form. Degrading as it may be next to other styles of human association, armed conflict is still a struggle between men and men. Your client was not moving from one field of death to another, but from death to dignity. The proof lies precisely in the graves that he kept visiting of his fellow Jewish soldiers. They *had* graves. He knew even graves must be earned.

Our dignity might have been greater had the Arabs been able to accept our political reality as the British finally did when they withdrew from Palestine in 1948. But the British were exhausted. Having entered World War II with nothing to gain but what they stood to lose, they had drawn on all their resources, in the most important war ever fought, to produce arguably the "finest hour" of this millennium. They had no more stomach for battle in distant lands.

The Arabs were in quite a different mood. Where Europe had drained itself on the fields of slaughter, the Arabs emerged from the war free of their colonial occupiers, poised to consolidate their individual states and a united Arab nation. What an irritant the emergent Jewish state must have presented—irritant, but also opportunity. "The whole Arab people is unalterably opposed to the attempt to impose Jewish immigration and settlement upon it and ultimately to establish a Jewish state in Palestine." Who but we could so have united the otherwise divided Arabs to pronounce the confident phrase, "the whole Arab people"? We were all they had in common. The weakness of the Jews had been amply demonstrated by the Germans, our standing in the community of nations even more conclusively. With the prospect of Arab hegemony in the Middle East so tantalizingly near, why indeed should they have agreed to share even a speck of land with a people whom civilized Europe had so

recently starved, burned, gassed, shot, buried alive, reduced to fertilizer? Given their perspective, the Arabs would have been fools to accept partition without first trying to destroy the Jewish enemy.

So the gesture of accommodation was withheld, and the Jews had to fight for their sovereignty—like most other nations in world history. Israel suffered over 30,000 dead and wounded in its War of Independence. Yet at that point it still seemed that in denying the Jews their right to the land the Arabs were denying no more and no less than combatants normally deny to one another, and were forcing them to defend what combatants normally must defend. We considered ourselves a war's length from peace.

THAT optimism lasted over two decades. People who set out for Israel between the time my brother's group sailed in 1949 and the summer you and I met in the Sinai in 1969 were "winners" because Israel itself appeared to be on the verge of winning its place in the world. As long as we thought the Arabs would abide by the logic of war we felt ourselves masters of our fate. We Jews had only to prove our determination to remain a sovereign people in our homeland for the Arabs eventually to admit us as worthy enemies, then grudgingly accept us as neighbors, and finally recognize our usefulness as friends.

The Six-Day War felt like final victory. On June 12, 1967, Jews were certain that now, at last, Jordan would sue for some of its lost land, Egypt for the Sinai, even sullen Syria for a strip of the Golan Heights. Israel had just fought the perfect war. It was at this juncture that internal Jewish resistance to Zionism also briefly dissolved. Whatever happened to the American Council for Judaism? Even residual Jewish Trotskyites paid the country their first tentative visit and found themselves admiring the forests planted by the Jewish National Fund. You could not go much further to impress the skeptics.

I'm not likely to forget the euphoria of the late 1960's, as you and I had our momentary share in it. Instead of the graveyards that had been readied outside Tel Aviv for an estimated 40,000 casualties there were "only" 777 deaths, and a reunited Jerusalem. The Israel Institute for Applied Social Research published its polls on returning the captured territories in exchange for peace, and the figures showed overwhelming majorities of Israelis in a mood of utter magnanimity. After a victory of such scope, Israel had every reason to believe that it could relax its vigilance.

We misjudged the Arabs. They were not the reasonable enemy of our expectations, and their rejection was not subject even to the judgment of war, that final arbiter of political disputes. Quite the opposite. The great victory, which

pushed the natural boundaries of Israel to their maximal limits, alerted the Arabs to the outer limit of the Israeli threat. Having lost the most lopsided of modern military confrontations, they discovered they still had the power to deny the victor regional acceptance. We had given them this power. Arab propagandists might trumpet their fear of Jewish expansionism, and circulate the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* with its warning of Jewish world conquest, but as surely as Hitler knew, despite his words, that the Jews were not about to take over Europe, so the Arabs knew that the Jews had no ambition to take over the Middle East. Israel wanted a place on the map, and in the Six-Day War it had played its final card. Would the Israelis now march on Damascus? Were they about to seize Amman from King Hussein? Did they covet the beaches of Beirut? Would the Jews return as conquerers to the Pyramids? What a joke! The Arabs, an imperial people contemptuous of weakness, saw the Jewish hunger for peace glinting through the Israeli armor and knew that they had it in their power to starve us.

I'm now right on the heels of Mrs. Richman's "nowadays," because this is exactly where it began—with the decision on the part of the Arabs to continue their siege and with the dawning realization on the part of the Jews that one more war might not in fact be the last. There seemed to be no way to win the acceptance we had so long pursued. The Jewish people, after suffering six million deaths, might finally have consolidated a country of their own because they could no longer trust in the decency of nations, but the Arabs were about to teach us a deeper lesson: a sovereign Jewish people could be rejected as forcefully as a homeless tribe. The legitimacy of the Jewish state could be denied as ruthlessly as, once, the legitimacy of the Jewish religion.

I don't think we have properly appreciated the genius of the Arab campaign since 1967. (The Jew's tendency to underestimate his enemies has not been tempered even by his experience in this century.) The War of Attrition along the Suez Canal and the Yom Kippur attack of 1973 were in some ways the least of it. More impressive was the growing Arab support for the PLO, a bastard radical band that after 1967 was nursed by the Arab states into a full-scale terrorist army. Arab governments might not be able to transfer their sights from Israeli soldiers to Jewish women and children—at least not without incurring international displeasure and provoking Israel's counterattack—but with safe passports and comfortable bank accounts, "homeless" killers could massacre at will. Israel scored no points with European opinion for the agricultural and engineering teams it sent out to underdeveloped countries. These were written off as so much self-promotion. It was the Arab death squads that won European respect. How desperately must the Pal-

estinian Arabs desire this land from the Jews if they go to such chilling lengths to eliminate the usurpers. The more Jews the PLO killed, the more it gained the respect of Europe as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arabs.

THE master stroke of Arab strategy was the war on Zionism. War is said to be the extension of politics, but the Arabs made politics the extension of war. They enlarged their war on Israel into an attack on the idea of Israel. Zionism, the Jewish claim to a homeland, was declared racist because it deprived Palestinian Arabs of *their* homeland. If you believe in the force of ideas you have to grant the Arabs their triumph, because they destroyed at a stroke what it had taken us over a century to achieve.

The keys to Arab political success were the substitution of "homeless Palestinian" for homeless Jew and the inversion of all the facts and terms of the Jewish national struggle. The same "whole Arab people" that had been "unalterably opposed to . . . a Jewish state in Palestine" now accused the Jews of having denied that state to the Palestinian Arabs. The Arabs, having themselves first rendered the Palestinians homeless by refusing to accept partition in 1948, and having kept them homeless by refusing to resettle in their vast lands those who needed a home, now blamed this condition of homelessness on the Jews. And indeed, they had their evidence. The camps are still there after, incredibly, almost four decades!

Of the million Jewish refugees from Arab lands, Israel today shows hardly a living trace. The tin-roofed transit shacks where the refugees broiled in summer and froze in winter have long since been replaced by modern apartments which, if they do not quite satisfy our aesthetic taste or the full needs of their residents, are still not designed to elicit the sympathy of the outside world. The Arab states, for their part, cultivated refugees the way others raise orchids, with the result that they now boast generations of destitute women and children. Everywhere the homeless Palestinians appear with their stigmata, to charge the Zionists with usurpation, racism, genocide.

It's funny, isn't it, that the Arabs, who place such value on military prowess, should have lost the wars of conquest, while the Jews, who take pride in the power of their intellect, should have lost the war of ideas? By declaring the illegitimacy of Zionism the Arabs not only robbed us of our rightful claims on them, but charged us with the very crime of which they rightly stood accused. Within less than a decade they deprived us of our moral advantage and reestablished us as a suspect nation that threatens the human equilibrium.

You know better than I how this works. You're the one who explained to me that there is no crime before the law if no one is prepared to lay

a charge. Thus, Jordan does not allow a Jew within its borders, and discriminates even against Jewish tourists. Jordanian law condemns an Arab to death for selling land to a Jew! Yet Jordan will never be indicted for racism, because there is no Jew self-respecting enough to press the charge. The Arabs have in any case preempted any moral or legal claims that we may have brought against them by accusing us of the original sin of *entry* into the Middle East to drain the swamps, plant the vineyards, and build Tel Aviv. As my mother says, *Az men fregt a shayle vert treyf*: you have only to put the question for the rabbi to pronounce the thing unclean. At the same Table of Nations that once credited our right to exist, our legitimacy is called daily into question. We stand accused—as by Christians through the centuries for the murder of Jesus—not for what is correctible, but for the fact of our national existence. No physical harm the Arabs can ever do us is as great as this accusation, because the charge justifies all the harm they will ever do us, calls it forth as a holy mission.

Mona Richman, apparently oblivious to Arab propaganda, nevertheless responds to the continuing barrage through her disappointment in a declining Israel. The real source of her anxiety is too dangerous to confront. When the Arabs revived in bold new form the accusation of our illegitimacy, they themselves may not have realized the potency of their idea among those to whom the Mona Richmans of the world feel they must truly answer. I mean, of course, the court of liberal opinion that is itself always deferential to the Left. The hostility to Jewish national revival was already smoldering on the Left—had been smoldering, in fact, since the 20's and 30's—and had only to be stoked by the Arabs into a blaze. Let's face it: knowing on our flesh the "cash-value" of anti-Jewish ideas, we have good reason to lie awake at night over the knowledge that in 1984, 41 members of the United Nations voted to expel Israel from their midst. Mona Richman, who values her sleep, finds it more convenient to attribute to the Jewish state the failure of her hopes for it.

I hope you don't get the impression from the turn of my letter that it is meant to protect you. It's not Israel's reputation that's in question but our deceit. In today's issue of the Canadian *Jewish News* (one of the many vehicles you've sacrificed in moving away from here) a luncheon speaker is quoted as describing the disenchantment of Diaspora Jews with Israel as "the cooling passion of a normal marriage." In 1948, he says, we saw Israel through the adoring eyes of newlyweds. Now, nearing our fortieth anniversary, we find it hard to credit the wife of our youth with even a single charm. The audience, which must have overlooked the lie as well as the vulgarity, is said to have applauded.

If long-married couples are supposedly so bored

with each other, why do Israelis these days look so lovingly on *us*? Hardly the irksome mate in an arid union, we Diaspora Jews seem to have released in our spouses a warmer, deeper affection. Israel's intellectuals, politicians, and businessmen flirt with us as never before. And indeed, why shouldn't they appreciate our value? Thriving on a continent of apparently limitless resources, we are spared the affront of hatred. Our sons are taken in marriage by the untitled princesses of the land. Our manifold flaws are no longer of much interest even to satirists. No one abhors us—only they, the occupiers of Zion, now give us a bad name. In a grotesque reversal, it is the Israelis who are now charged with poisoning the wells, while the majority of Jews in the lands of plenty live a life of normalcy such as the Jewish people has always dreamed of.

Our Israeli bride was once irresistible to us, because she brought us the dowry of international good will. Now that the Arabs and their various sponsors and toadies have smeared her with the filth of their loathing, for us too she has begun to assume the twisted shape of the ghetto Jew. Why, look, we say, she is full of warts: her democracy is endangered, her greed corrupts the purity of her soul, her fanatics are flourishing, her economy is faltering, her leaders flounder. Our disappointment, whose source is in the Arabs and in ourselves—in them for so irrationally rejecting our presence, in ourselves for not conclusively affirming it—we attribute ever more self-righteously, belligerently, to the Jewish state.

AM I absurd, barely forty-eight hours after your departure, to begin addressing you as an Israeli, with a sense of much more than geographic distance between us? Now that you have your Identity Card, are you suddenly the magnified Other? I'm reminded of my first year as a teacher, and of my class of engineering students. Considerately I prepared my lectures on Chaucer and Spenser with analogies to slide rules, bridge construction, and electrical sockets—until a delegation of young men came to say that they would appreciate my lectures more if I just treated them the way I would anyone else. I will not forget the lesson they taught me in the dangers of artificial differentiation, and I'm even less likely to forget how much you and I have in common. But the differences I note are true, as I can show by a simple example.

Tomorrow night, when it comes, first for you and seven hours later for me, we will both be sitting with our families watching the evening news. Coincidentally, both your family and mine will be tuned in to our neighbor's broadcast: we because we prefer the range of U.S. coverage, you for the linguistic convenience of Jordan's prime-time news in English. My children will feel beside them the protective shield of the freest country in the world, and let us hope the strongest. To be

sure, one or another of their trendy teachers will have warned them of the dangers of cultural oppression, and tried to sell them on the charms of victim-chic, but they are smart enough to know themselves blessed.

Your children, meanwhile, will feel themselves brushed by the political intentions of a mean state that projects its weather map of the region *without any sign of Israel on it*—neither small, medium, nor large. One night in the Jewish homeland and they will know themselves despised, rejected, contingent. No doubt some of their trendy teachers will pretend that such details don't matter, given the essential brotherhood of the human race. They are smart enough to know themselves threatened.

You will do a good job of assuring your family that their new country is sufficiently powerful to withstand its enemies, and so, for the moment, it may be. But what can shield them from the hate? Will you try to teach them that God's protecting love must compensate for the destructive will of the Arabs? Will you try to teach them that adversity strengthens? Will you remind them that as Sadat came at last to Jerusalem, so too will the

other Arab rulers, each in his time, and, one hopes, in theirs? Jewish hope has been a questionable asset in this century, and if you are going to feed it to your children, they'd be well advised to live on tight rations. Tell them Sadat's coming makes their odds with the Arabs a little better, at least, than with our vaunted messiah.

There is nothing so debilitating as unrequited hostility directed against you. You find you don't want to expend the energy required to defend yourself, but you also don't want to live askew in someone else's mind with no power over his warped image. So you retreat, or deny, or turn the disease inward. Of course, as fellow Jews we now bear a far from equal burden of the curse of hatred that pursues us. It would be corrupt to pretend otherwise.

Yes, I know, I told you that I know, this has nothing to do with your decision. Like your brother who went to Palo Alto, you're moving to a land of the free and a home of the brave. The same lust for sunshine. The same tempting plum of a job. I will try to keep that in mind as I read the news. . . .

WITH LOVE—

Alzheimer's

A Story

Kelly Cherry

Applaud, friends, the comedy is over.

—BEETHOVEN (on his deathbed)

THE year my father was a graduate student at the conservatory in Chicago, he had to carry a full course load, prepare and give a recital, write a string quartet, write and orchestrate a violin concerto, take one academic subject at the University of Chicago (he chose poetry), write a thesis, and make up two undergraduate credits by correspondence from Louisiana State University, where he was normally on the faculty. He also had to support a wife and child. He was on sabbatical, at half-salary. His daily ration frequently was a lettuce salad and a cup of coffee. He was as thin as a fiddle string. His composition teacher, a Zen Buddhist from Indianapolis, attributed this to the vegetarian diet he'd clearly converted my father to—all that lettuce. My father refrained from disabusing his teacher of this notion, because he wanted an A. His teacher thought that my father, with his otherwise promising system cleaned out, could perform feats of creativity not yet seen in the classroom.

One day it happened. The teacher sent my father to the blackboard to write a piece in third rondo form. The board was so black, between the white lines of the staff, that it made my exhausted father think of night—and sleep. He stood at the board in a sort of stupor. The professor looked up from his desk and saw him standing there, motionless, chalk in hand.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I can't seem to think," my father said.

"Write a key signature," he instructed.

My father dutifully put two sharps on the staff.

"Now add a time signature," the teacher said.

My father wrote down " $\frac{3}{4}$."

"Carry on," he said, and left the room.

My father started writing. He couldn't stop—

it was like a dream in which you have to get somewhere but you don't know where but you just keep going and the route begins to reveal itself. It was like the principle of inertia: having started to write music, he would continue to write music forever, unless an outside force intervened. Notes blossomed on the blackboard like snowdrops, like crocuses. He filled up the blackboard on that wall, then the one on the second wall, then the one on the third. When the professor returned there wasn't an empty space to be found on any wall. What excitement for the professor! He made my father sit at a desk and copy down the whole thing on paper so he could take it home and show it to his wife, another Zen Buddhist, from Teaneck, New Jersey. To celebrate his culinary/musical advance, they took my father to dinner (my mother stayed home with my brother). Menus were brought. The professor and his wife waited proudly for my father to demonstrate his allegiance to vegetarianism. "I'll have a steak," my father said. They looked at him in shock. "I break over at times," my father explained, trying not to meet their eyes.

I like this story because in it my father does something for himself. He has a chance to eat a decent meal—and he grabs it. It must have been almost the only time in his life that he didn't efface himself, either out of obligation, anxiety and self-consciousness, or naiveté. The men I've been serious about have been just the opposite—they took care of Number One first. That was true of my brother and my ex-husband, and it's true of Cliff, the man I loved most. Nothing gets between him and what he wants. Not that he's at all aware of this or would consider it a character failure if he were—and naturally, at the time I thought it was attractive, the way he took charge. I was impressed by how perceptive he was and didn't notice that that only gave him more leverage for manipulating life to his advantage. It seemed to me that he had my father's gentleness without the tendency to devalue himself that made my father assume he was locked out of the world before he'd even attempted to open the door.

ON THE tape on which my father's rendering of this story is recorded, his voice is faint. He was

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not far away from the microphone: we were sitting at the little table in the kitchen in England, where my parents had retired. (What they wanted to do with their retirement was listen to music, and there is more music per square foot in England than anywhere else in the world. The BBC begins its broadcasting day by playing a 440 A, so the entire country can go to work in tune.)

Dad had made that table, just as he made the first kitchen table I remember, the one in Ithaca, with a linoleum top, where he and my mother used to sit after one of their string quartet concerts, talking about how it'd gone and why the goddamned cellist couldn't play "Come to Jesus" in whole notes. (It didn't matter who the cellist was; he never could play "Come to Jesus" in whole notes.) We were so poor then. The apartment was a walk-up railroad flat three flights above a grocery store, near Suicide Bridge. If the sun ever shone during the five years we were in Ithaca, I don't remember it—but my parents, post-concert, were radiance personified; they were walking, talking illuminations of the fact that beauty could be created anywhere. My mother would be in one of her evening gowns—she had one that was green silk, one that was gold satin, and a black-and-white net tulle, with a stole—and my father, handsome as a matinee idol with his classical-violinist's profile, would be dressed to the teeth in tails. When he played the violin, my father became a different person—he was forceful, with a brilliant tone. He often said that music was a language. When he spoke "in music," his meaning was unmistakable, and his voice had authority.

His voice on the tape is faint because he has emphysema. I can hear him gasping for air like a beached fish. I can see the way his head jerks up when he does this, as if seeking more air—but the problem is that his lungs can't take in the air that's there. My parents were heavy smokers. They smoked so many unfiltered Chesterfields that when we lived in Virginia the dog was named Liggett and the cat Myers. Now my father can hardly talk, and even on the tape, made four years ago, his voice is vanishing.

It's as if he spoke up for himself so seldom in his life that his voice has atrophied.

WHAT interests me now, the reason I am listening to this tape so attentively, is that, on it, there is no sign of mental impairment. My father is quick and detailed. It is not merely that he can still recite from *The Book of Knowledge*—the child's encyclopedia that has become a comic legend in our family as the source and sum of just about all his non-musical knowledge and from which he learned everything about the world that he could in Rockhill, South Carolina, including how to make a cigar-box violin, which was, however, such a disappointment that he immediately constructed another out of pine

wood, carving the f-holes with a penknife—but he remembers the program Paderewski played at Emory Hall, how Fritz Reiner tried to get the concertmaster fired so he could give the job to his friend Joseph Szigeti (who was twenty-five then, and whom I shook hands with backstage when he was seventy and I was twenty), and even, irrelevantly, the plots of his brother's short stories (a Frenchman comes to South Carolina and locates three gold pits, after having three portentous dreams about them, but then can't raise the money to mine them, and dies broke). If there is anything missing here, it is so minute that no one would know it. I ask him what he remembers about his childhood in the big house on Oakland Avenue. Leafy oaks lined the sidewalk. In the springtime, the jonquils were like floral light bulbs, glowing goldenly. Dray horses and streetcars traveled the length of the street. The streetcars ran on storage batteries rather than cables; they clanged down Oakland out to West Main and the car barn where they were recharged for the trip back. Why Rockhill had this sophisticated mass-transit system remains a mystery; there were not a lot of places to go to in Rockhill, South Carolina, no matter where you started out from.

They were trying desperately to sell that house, with its parquet floors and high ceilings and specialized rooms (the nursery, the parlor, the library, the sewing room). For a couple of years after my father was born, they were quite well off. His father was a lawyer, and, briefly, even a State Senator. The townsfolk called him "Judge," but he refused actually to run for the office because he was afraid he might someday have to pronounce the death sentence on somebody. He was an imposing man, with red hair (but he married late and it was gray by the time my father was born), a massive head on a body like a display pedestal for a Roman bust, and a sense of humor, which he gave to my father, that sustained him when times turned hard. His brother, a wealthy businessman who had been his main client and income, died. By the time my father was old enough to start accumulating memories, his family was poor—much poorer than even we were in Ithaca, poorer than my parents in Chicago.

The atmosphere in the house changed; it was as if the house itself had grown old, become sick and bitter and envious of youth. My father's father escaped from it into his office, where he read and reread his much-beloved Shakespeare instead of transacting business. He sat at his desk wearing a black mohair jacket, shoestring tie, stiff collar, and gray English morning trousers, reading plays which he already knew by heart. Meanwhile, my father's mother burst moodily upon the scene in the house's various rooms, melodramatically announcing to her children that she wished she'd never been born and so might have been spared the aggrava-

tion of their misbehavior. She was very pretty and possibly insanely pessimistic. She was seventeen years younger than her husband, a small, frail, dark woman with disturbingly bright, sparkling eyes. She had been a pampered child, the daughter of a plantation farmer who owned one thousand slaves. She never learned to cook or clean house; even after the money was gone, she refused to do either. She taught drama at the high school. My father was confused sometimes because she told such extraordinary lies that he was not sure whether he was supposed to laugh at them or pretend to believe them. My brother inherited her ability to rewrite reality whenever it suited him. My father, on the other hand, has never lied about anything in his life, and when he impulsively said to the National Health doctor, who had come out to the house to bring my mother the cortisone for her inflamed arteries, that the next-door neighbors have the same last name he, the doctor, does, Hood, my mother wondered why he would lie about something like that. The neighbors' last name is Woodbine. She asked him why he had said such a false thing. "I don't know," my father said, bewildered. "I really don't know." His eyes seemed to be scurrying around in his face like frightened mice. They disappeared under the shelf of his eyebrows. It was as if he was afraid to look at himself. "I can't imagine why I said that," he said.

AND this is how it begins, the horrible end.

AFTER his first year at Cincinnati, my father transferred to Chicago—a mistake, he said, regretting the loss of Perutz, his violin teacher there. I think he felt he'd betrayed Perutz by transferring. (Perutz was later found dead in an anonymous field, the victim of an overdose—whether accidental or intentional, nobody knew.) But Chicago was unbeatable in one respect: he worked as an usher at Orchestra Hall. "That was the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me, I think," he says on the tape. "It was worth far more to me than my training at the Conservatory. Mischa Elman, Albert Spalding, Heifetz, Milstein, Paul Kohansky, Thibaud, oh God, I heard them all. Thibaud played the *Symphonie Espagnole*, Lalo you know, which ends with four high d's, three quarter-notes and a dotted half—and he was a half-step flat on all of them. I heard pianists and singers. Ravel. Koussevitzky conducting the Boston Symphony. But as for the fiddle players—nobody could touch Kreisler. Not Heifetz, not Milstein. He was the one." I ask him why, what made Kreisler special. "It was his tone more, I think, than anything else. He always played out of tune, you know, something terrible, but it was just so godawful beautiful. It was the sheer beauty of the sound that he produced. Tears came to my eyes. And the verve. . . . Well, he just influenced the whole

world. Everybody began to imitate him. He had this intense vibrato, even in rapid-passage work, but it was his bowing too. Sometimes he never used more than this much bow. Yet he could sustain a note forever."

That's my father right there, his susceptibility to musical beauty and the nearly unattainable standards he set for himself and others. Contempt enters his voice whenever he mentions a musician who was less than "fine" or "sterling." I feel angry when I hear him being critical like that. My mother is even more critical. I know that they didn't set out to despise the world; they only externalized their self-blame. They hated themselves for not being perfect violinists—or just perfect, period. I want to wave a wand that will take away all that useless blame and allow them to enjoy life. "Some people are all right," I want to shout at the tape. "A lot of people are all right!" But would they listen? Did they care? The truth is, they were both pretty much uninvolved with the world of people. It simply didn't seem worth thinking about, the way music did. It's enough to make you believe in destiny: something pulled this man and this woman out of unlikely backgrounds toward one life. While my mother was practicing down South, as if rehearsing for her future, my father was earning one glorious dollar a night ushering in Orchestra Hall. He worked the second balcony. Friday afternoons and Saturday nights, the Chicago Symphony played the series programs, Frederick Stock conducting. When Kreisler played there, they had to set up seats on the back of the stage. On that occasion, my father was asked to usher on the side of the auditorium from which Kreisler approached the stage. Each time he went on, my father opened the door for him, and Kreisler never failed to thank him. Oh, my father remembers every soloist, the migrations of musicians and conductors all over the world, who studied with whom, and that the music librarian was the fourth trumpet player, a Mr. Hanke. How he loved those days and nights in Orchestra Hall! A woman who sat on the top row, aisle seat, always brought a box of candy which she shared with him, my young father, while he sat beside her on the steps. The dark red seats pitched down the slope of the hall like a field of poppies.

THE word we did not want to hear has now been pronounced: Alzheimer's. It is a word that starts with a screech, like an untalented child at his first violin lesson. My mother asks if this means he will have to be placed in an institution. "Not necessarily," says Dr. Hood. "He is late to develop the disease. Institutions are for younger patients." In other words, he may die first.

Alzheimer's results in a marked alteration of both personality and ideation. I am not convinced that my father has it—this is a trendy diagnosis,

an extensive evaluation has *not* been undertaken, it is easier (and cheaper) to write my elderly father off than to investigate the effects on him of depression, partial deafness, chronic hypoxia caused by emphysema, and steroid medications, which can induce psychosis.

My father knows something is wrong. He falls silent (that he barely has the breath to talk with anymore gives him an excuse). If he doesn't say anything, no one will know that he has trouble finding the right words. He is clever. When asked what year it is, he winks and says it's *The Year of Living Dangerously*—a bad movie I have told him about. When asked what day it is, he says it's the day which the day after tomorrow will be the day before yesterday. These are two of the ten questions that are used to determine degrees of mental confusion. Where are we now? Where is this place located? What is today's date? What month is it? What year is it? How old are you? When is your birthday? What year were you born? Who is the President of the United States? Who was the President before him?

In the late stages of Alzheimer's, the patient has no memory, no history; in short, no self. He no longer exists. It is just as if the body is a house that has been boarded up and vacated by the mind. Ironically, the patient knows what is happening to him as his mind begins to say farewell: he denies it, he compensates for it, and eventually, he feels a sense of loss that is like the loss of a loved one—his mind, his one true friend, the north on the compass of his relationship to the world, is gone. It has abandoned him, like a faithless lover.

He can no longer dress himself or find his way to the bathroom. He walks with a stoop, taking safe, mincing steps (the *marche à petits pas*). The snout reflex appears—a puckering of the lips. He becomes apathetic. He has no will power because he cannot continue a thought long enough to make it the basis of purposeful action. "It looks like death from boredom," commented the famous geriatrician Sir Martin Roth. The patient is bored because he can no longer engage in conversation, read, watch TV. He can no longer remember the names of his spouse, his children.

IN MY father's case, a further irony is to be found in the fact that a few years ago, long after the age when psychologists and psychiatrists stop allowing for any possibility of change, he began to change. Retirement was a blessing for him. He relaxed. He opened up. He wrote wonderful letters to me saying things he'd never admitted before. He donned a tweed Irish fisherman's hat, wrapped his warm English scarf around his neck, took up his cane, and walked Beauregard on the halter-leash. It was the first time in his life since he was a kid that he didn't have to work. He stopped to talk with children. He grew immensely fond of the old horse in the pasture at the edge

of the Close and always took along a sugar cube for him, enjoying the ticklish kiss of the animal's leathery muzzle on the palm of his hand. He struck up conversations with passersby, friendships with the neighbors. The house got him down—like his own father before him, he fled from pessimism and crisis. Mother's standards had become so extreme that, I guess, my father in rebellion began to lower his. He'd leave the house with his agitated heart knocking hollowly in his weak chest like an ancient steam radiator, and by the time he reached the candy store/post office he was simply happier than he'd been in his whole life, except of course for when he was playing quartets.

I ASK my father when he knew that he wanted to play quartets. The Flonzaley Quartet came to Rockhill, as part of the local college's concert series. "I fell in love with quartet playing right then," he says. "I never wanted to do anything else." He was still in high school—he was left out on the football team so the kids wouldn't razz him about his fiddle playing. The impulse to play had come mysteriously from somewhere inside himself. He had taught himself to read music. He had earned the money for his first real violin from his paper route: it came from Sears, Roebuck, in a cardboard case, with a cake of resin and a copy of the National Tutor, a home-study method. (Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward raised a generation of fiddle players.)

Violins were my parents' one luxury. My mother had a gorgeous little Soliani. My father owned a Guadagnini—one of the best Guadagninis. He had written to a Chicago firm in 1940, asking if they would sell him a Guadagnini on the installment plan. "What's the use of doing things in steps?" he wrote, defensively. "I'm going to keep on trading each fiddle in until I work my way up to a Guadagnini. Why not let me have a Guadagnini now?" To his amazement, they sent him a Guadagnini—and a contract for monthly payments that marched into eternity. We sometimes didn't eat, but nothing kept those checks from going in the mail.

IT ALL speeds up.

One day I find my father standing in front of the chiming clock, staring at it intently. After a while I realize that he is not trying to tell time; he is trying to figure out why anyone would put numbers in a circle, making it difficult to add or subtract them. I walk up behind him and slip my hand into his. The knuckles of his hand are so swollen with arthritis that it would be impossible to finger a violin with it. Even though Cliff is no longer in my life, I can't help wishing he could have shaken this hand—the two men would have liked each other. I clasp it tightly. The ridiculous question I want to ask is, Why are good, hard-working

people cheated out of their harmless dreams? I want to ask this question even though I know there's no answer. I wonder what degree of mental confusion this indicates.

MY MOTHER can't decide between rage and pity. If she lets herself feel sorry for him, she opens the door on her own grief and fear. If she gets angry at him for deserting her, she finds herself berating him for things he does not understand. He wants to help out around the house. He tries to make her a cup of cocoa—she works so hard, he can bring her a cup of cocoa. The pot boils over. He picks it up from the burner and sets it down in the plastic dishrack. The rack melts. He smells the scorch and moves the pot to another burner. Plastic has stuck to the bottom of the pot and seeps onto the stove—now two burners are ruined. The pot, the stove, and the dishrack are a mess. My mother yells at my father. My father retreats upstairs like a dog that has been shamed. My mother stands in the kitchen, shaking. She cries, cursing herself for her short temper. Then she sees me. “What are you standing there for?” she shouts. “Don’t you have anything better to do than watch two old people fight?”

ON THE tape, he tells me how they met.

Black Friday visited the country in my father's senior year. He was catapulted straight from college into the Great Depression. I think that fact as much as anything contributed to his enduring sense of defeat. He couldn't find a job. Instead, he went to New York to study with Hugo Kortschak, a violinist who was highly respected by the critics and truly loved by his students. The warmth in my father's voice as he speaks of him is attractive. In Kortschak's apartment on East 91st Street, they worked on the Bach A-minor Concerto. “He was awfully good to me,” my father says. Kortschak gave him every other lesson free—and when years later the maestro retired from Yale, he had no pension, because that was how a major university treated a first-rate violinist, my father and his other students, who included Jack Benny, spontaneously undertook to raise a subscription to help him out. “Pity,” Kortschak, his tongue in his cheek, said, when the reporters asked him about Benny, “he would have gone far.” Without Kortschak, my father says, he would have gone crazy in New York. For days on end, he had no one to speak to. He couldn't afford to go to concerts. The ushers at Carnegie Hall were old men with long white beards. The waiters, even the dishwashers, at the cafeteria were unionized. He almost stopped writing away for teaching jobs, having become convinced that something in his letters was turning people off, and when the Director of Music at LSU wrote to him offering him a job, he was afraid to reply in complete sentences. He sent a

telegram: Is job permanent? All over the country, colleges were folding, as easily as if they'd been paper. Stopher—that was his name—wired back: Play well and teach well, and the job is permanent. My father raced to Kortschak's apartment, the telegram in his trembling hands. “Is this a job offer?” he asked, not daring to believe his own interpretation of the evidence. “It is,” Kortschak said, smiling.

The train to Louisiana was packed. My father began to sweat, worried about his appearance, and sweated some more. His sister had bought his traveling clothes for him, all secondhand: a wool overcoat, wool suit. The compartment swayed back and forth hypnotically. Goldenrod and daisies sprouted alongside the train track like whiskers. He arrived in Baton Rouge at midday. A bunch of girls were at the station to meet him—a welcoming committee, he thought. They handed him a “bouquet” of stinkweed. They were furious with him for taking their adored teacher's place—Mrs. Sulinda Mays was moving on. “Thank God,” said my mother, the lone dissenter. That afternoon, in her farewell performance, Sulinda played “The Swiss Lullaby,” in which the violin is made to “yodel.” Those stupid girls wept like the Alps melting—floods of spring. “I don't think it was so bad,” my father said, deciding they were upset because the concert was so awful. He was still trying to be friendly. “I don't think you should cry about it.” They glared at him as if he was a madman. Maybe he was. He had thought he was being tactful.

Stopher showed him around the department, opening studio doors randomly and introducing him to whoever was behind them. Uppermost in my father's mind was just one question: was he good enough to teach the students? When Stopher opened a door and introduced him to my mother, who was practicing for her upcoming recital, he thought, Well, I can handle her. “She's been proving me wrong ever since.”

THEY both agree—Chicago was their happiest year. No money to buy Christmas presents for my brother—they had a grand total of twenty-five cents to spend. My father wandered around the five-and-dime, trying to work up the nerve to steal something. He didn't. He blew the quarter on a blue spinning top, and the grandparents sent wind-up trains and stuffed animals and tinker toys and tin soldiers. It was 1936, a charmed year, and nothing could go wrong. Sans sleep, sans food, sans money, they were energetic and exuberant, in love with each other and music.

IT FEELS like I'm being cheated—someone is stealing him from me. He is my own stuffed animal, my tin violinist, my top, and someone has made off with him in his coat pocket—down the street, around the corner.

There are days when nothing seems to be wrong. Perhaps he says my name rather oddly often: Nina, did you bring in the mail? Tell me about life in Wisconsin, Nina. (I have told him that it is a bizarre place where hardy creatures hunch over tiny ice-holes in January, trying to coax winter-numbed fish into smelly, oily buckets. Seldom are these fish eaten—they take up space in the freezer until summer, when they are pitched out to make room for canned tomatoes.) Nina, he says, I like your hair that way. Nina, Nina, Nina. And perhaps this is how he reminds himself who I am. But the sun shines, or it rains—nature is imperturbable—and life seems sad but comprehensible. Then there are the Other Days: he won't talk, won't look at us. He's afraid to go anywhere, do anything. He understands one thing only: that the world has become a treacherous place, full of deceptively innocent-appearing objects, like pots and dishracks, that can turn on him. When I ask him a question, I realize that his mind is like a house that has been ransacked—some things untouched, others overturned, some very precious things taken from him forever. This is disorganized crime. A memory-thief has been here—yanking out facts, making off with the best impressions. On these days, he is not the only one who finds life incomprehensible: I am left wondering what it means to be a person, when a stupid concentration of brain lesions, a webby jumble of neurofibrillary tangles and neuritic plaques in the hippocampus and neocortex, can deprive you of any self-definition at all. Is my father a computer whose command disk just happened to get erased? Were his feelings of despair and unworthiness, that he fielded all his life and at the last was victorious over, simply bugs in the program that an improved childhood might have eliminated? Was his love of music and the violin a technological quirk? Is passion irrelevant?

HE SITS in the chair in front of the telly. He is wearing the sweater-vest that I sent him at Christmas time: he puts it on every day when he gets up and refuses to take it off until bedtime. It suits him: a muted blue-gray with a small print, with wood buttons. Very intellectual-looking, but masculine.

We sit in three chairs, in a row: Papa Bear, Mama Bear, and me in the middle. This is how we pass our evenings. Tonight Pinchas Zukerman is playing the Beethoven Violin Concerto with the London Symphony in Festival Hall. Despite the TV-tinniness, the music is an affirmation, it is the one national anthem my family responds to. Me too—I'm with my folks on this, I'd give my life to create beauty like that. I *have* given my life to it.

This is what I'm thinking and maybe feeling

a tad self-congratulatory about, when I look at my father and see that good old Pinky Zukerman, one of the truly nice people in the world, is playing a fiddle with five strings: the fifth string is invisible and extends from the television set to a bewildered frail man in a cherished sweater-vest. This is the man who once stood in a doorway in Richmond, while Oistrakh was playing this piece on the phonograph, and said, "My God, it just tears your heart out, doesn't it!" The music travels down that thread and my father weaves the pattern of his life out of it, teaching me what it really means to devote your life to something you love. During the cadenza, he is fully himself again. It was through music that he knew the world, and it's through music that he knows himself.

His hands are resting at his sides in a pose characteristic of Alzheimer's victims—cupped, with the thumbs adducted. But then his left hand starts to move—he is fingering the Beethoven Violin Concerto right along with Zukerman. My mother sees it too. He can still play. On the violin of his mind, he can still play.

LATER, I go to my room and turn on the tape, listening to it from the beginning again while I pack my suitcase. Moonlight laminates the room. It makes the red geraniums in the windowbox look like slick plastic, like pinwheels.

On the tape, my father's voice speaks to me—not always about music, because he was capable of a wonderful self-deflating sense of silliness that he frequently used to puncture his own intensity with. On almost any occasion, he could quote some appropriate piece of nonsense (not to mention Spartacus's speech to the gladiators, which he'd memorized for the school assembly at age eight: "Ye call me chief, and ye do well to call me chief!"). I wonder how consciously self-referential he was being when to test whether our tape was working he recited the verse from Lewis Carroll with which the interview now begins, me not having any idea at the time that we were transferring from one reel to another a world, a life, that was already vanishing. Wheezing and laughing and choking, struggling for breath but cracking up over the complete craziness of it, he recites the first stanza. I assume he got it from *The Book of Knowledge*:

And now if here by chance I put my fingers
into glue
Or madly squeeze a righthand foot into a left-
hand shoe

I weep, for it reminds me so
Of that old man I used to know
With eyes like cinders all aglow,
Who snorted like a buffalo,
A-sitting on a gate.

Beyond California

Roger Sandall

FROM a distance it looked as if the harbor breakwater at Fremantle was covered with moving derrières, and a closer view confirmed that this was so. Not a face was visible: just waving bottoms. There was no reason to panic, however, and the TV cameraman proceeded to shoot this spectacle with commendably professional sangfroid. More knowledgeable than the rest of us, he quickly recognized the scene for what it was—a Polynesian insult called *whakapohane* which was being staged by a crowd of New New Zealanders. He also observed that they had kept their trousers on, kindly sparing us the full-undress *whakapohane*, a much more severe ordeal.

The object of their posterior disdain was the American, Dennis Conner, whose yacht *Stars and Stripes* had already beaten them three times in the America's Cup trials, and was about to beat them once more. For this reason they had lined the shore to give him the sort of send-off which any normal man would find discouraging. Not only Mr. Conner, however, but the rest of mankind as well, must have been surprised and disappointed that this is how the New New Zealanders wish to be remembered by the civilized world. They turn their backs upon it. They wave their backsides at it.

Not so long ago the citizens of this small nation were perfectly happy climbing mountains or playing rugby football. And those who showed more ambition were on the whole generously treated. The

more bookish Old New Zealanders, who went to England or America for study, found themselves accepted fairly painlessly into the world of learning, where, after only a few years, some of them were able to pass as civilized, even in mixed company. But you have only to set this sort of thing down in cold print to recognize it as a fading memory of times gone by. New New Zealanders have a single enthusiasm: politics. And the aggressive passions once harmlessly released on football fields now drive them to bawl "Yankee Go Home," or to pelt Her Britannic Majesty with eggs, or to bare their tattooed buttocks at the Pope.

Who are these awful people? What do they look like? What makes them menacingly tick?

Exhibit 1. Grinning hugely, and with glistening buttery cheeks, Miss Joy Gribben appears to embody the happier results of a dairy surplus. And if the hand tugging at the bottom of her T-shirt in order to make its slogan more readable suggests something less demure, this is appropriate too: for Joy is a member of the Harry Holland Brigade, and is off to Nicaragua in the morning. With twelve others, "each of whom has raised \$4,000 for the expedition," and two documentary film-makers, she is going to pick coffee by day and sing Sandinista campfire songs by night.

Exhibit 2. Miss Ripeka Evans, aged thirty-one, a Maori, is the newly appointed Cultural and Planning Assistant to the Director-General of Television New Zealand. Her credentials are unclear. As a student she dropped out of university in her fourth year and went off to Cuba. Lately her energies have been mainly devoted "to

forcing issues of racism, sexism, and peace."

An officer of the Maori Economic Development Commission, Miss Evans holds strong views on the need for "an economic base" for "Maoridom." What she seems to mean by this is a large and regular budget allocation. This year, a reporter tells us admiringly, "she and her team extracted \$12.5 million," while in an eighteen-month period "nearly \$30 million [were] placed directly under Maori control." From street marching and demonstrations to a New Class appointment disposing of millions in public funds, the institutionalization of Miss Evans has followed a well-worn path.

Exhibit 3. Miss Marilyn Waring, until recently a National party MP (the National party being the New Zealand conservative party), writes a "Letter to My Sisters" column in the *Listener*. Bridling at an American suggestion that there might be something utopian in New Zealand's view of the world, she tells America that "in the light of the bombing of Libya, failed Titan, Cruise, and Challenger launchings, and the meltdown at Chernobyl, it seems strange that the New Zealand model isn't perceived as a common-sense model for the planet. Accidents, debris, iodide tablets, pregnant women and children confined indoors; radiocative air, banned food, dumped milk, vegetables, and meat; poisoned water, alerts, fallout, and fear, all seem to be trying to tell us something." Be that as it may, Miss Waring's inventory certainly tells us something about the state of mind of a characteristic, if unusually eloquent, New New Zealander. Every evil is really the same evil. And virtually all evil comes from the U.S.A.

Now what we have here are some remarkably busy bodies and improving minds. Indeed, if social self-righteousness could be bottled, or canned, or baled, New Zealand exports might easily lead the

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world. But then it has always been a bit like this in a country where the radiated intensity of public high-mindedness far exceeds safe levels.

In earlier times much of this zeal was channeled into missionary activity. During that long era in which the less enlightened parts of the globe were hospitable to evangelism, New Zealand missionaries were busy almost everywhere. Sometimes they achieved distinction, as Garfield Todd did in Rhodesia. Sometimes they achieved mere notoriety, as two Assembly of God missionaries, tried recently in Malaysia for offensively criticizing Islam, have done. But the breed itself has been ubiquitous. Scratch a peace-loving New Zealand liberator of the oppressed and you will find that Dad or Granddad was a preacher. Scratch the current New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange, and you will find he is a lay preacher himself (in the Methodist Church).

THE religious tradition, however, explains only about half of New Zealand's historic need to sermonize and instruct. For over fifty years, scores of admiring visitors have told the nation's citizens that they were the custodians of a unique social laboratory in which enlightened experiments were taking place; that the marvels of the welfare state which had been engineered in this laboratory were among the political wonders of the modern world; and that New Zealand's racial integration of whites and Maoris was exemplary. Need one add that this sort of thing goes to the head? Or that eulogism of this order (now pouring in from anti-nuclearists around the world) is what underpins Miss Waring's confident belief that New Zealand is "a common-sense model for the planet," a polity less favored nations should gratefully emulate?

A New Zealander did not need actually to visit the U.S. in order to understand America's racial problems. He grasped them intuitively, and felt able to lecture visiting Yanks on what they should obviously do. More important still was his familiarity with all ques-

tions of peace and war: war, he knew, usually originated in America. Moreover, this sure grasp of international relations had come without his ever reading any serious book about the Soviet Union—without his ever even wanting to. (Indeed, I suspect that if all the copies sold in New Zealand of Michael Voslesensky's recent book *Nomenklatura* were laid end to end they might, or they might not, just reach from one side to the other of an average Lubyanka cell.) When the typical New Zealand intellectual beheld the USSR it was with a kind of resigned regret. But no more than that. From the sources available to him (left-wing British papers like the *New Statesman* and the *Guardian*) it was perfectly clear that the West was directly or indirectly responsible for whatever might have gone wrong in post-revolutionary Russia; while for most other global evils one might safely assume the U.S. was to blame.

There was only one blemish in this otherwise satisfactory picture. Despite the self-evident strength of New Zealand's claim to moral leadership, the nation had never been invited to play a part on the world stage commensurate with its self-esteem. Its well-educated representatives were everywhere, swelling the ranks of the international bureaucracy in Geneva and Paris, sitting on committees in New York. Yet they had little to show for it. They remained a glorified servant class. Real power seemed beyond their grasp. New Zealand appeared too remote to be a convenient venue for anything; too prosperous credibly to represent the poor; and obviously much too white and Anglo-Saxon to understand the rest of mankind.

Then, in the last few years, another source of anxiety appeared. Old certitudes were badly shaken as the Great Truths of Welfareism had to contend with Even Greater Truths. It was discovered that government benefits should bear at least sketchy relation to government revenue. In an ironic way, New Zealand remains a "laboratory," but by far the most diverting experiment to be seen today is the spectacle of the ruling

Labor party's Finance Minister, Roger Douglas, deregulating everything in sight. As for race relations, perhaps the less said the better—though one is obliged to note that piratical lumpen-Polynesian gangs, affecting dreadlocks and Harley-Davidson motorcycles, have somewhat dimmed the shining fantasies of yesteryear.

AMONG the aware, the compassionate, and the concerned, these circumstances produced acute frustration. World events plainly called for the expression of bold and forthright views, but New Zealand had begun to resemble a missionary without a mission, or a preacher who had lost his faith. Its intelligentsia, if only out of habit, remained in a state of high ethical tumescence. Yet this was a difficult and uncomfortable condition when domestic policies lay in ruins, and the intellectuals really had nothing very clear to say. It will be appreciated, therefore, that when anti-nuclear Pacific Pacifism came along, providing a novel principle around which to build a new identity, and a platform from which to address the world, relief was general. Many saw it as a religion whose time had come.

For what could be more appealing than peace—unless it was peace in a nuclear-free zone? The very words and slogans guaranteed success. Here at last was an issue on which New Zealand would be listened to abroad, which would lead to regional influence, and even power. Globally, an expanding zone of South Pacific Pacifism would appeal to the Left as the strategic counterpart of an expanding Soviet military presence in the Caribbean. The first would project neutralism. The second would project military power. Both could incapacitate the American enemy in different ways.

For those who wished to raise Pan-Pacific consciousness the new movement also meant a chance to form a Pacific People's Anti-Nuclear Action Committee and to proclaim regional ethnic solidarity as an urgent goal. And there was another twist to the ethnic angle, too. War, weapons, and Westernization would be opposed in order

to preserve, not just the region, but something altogether more shrouded in mystique and pregnant with political possibilities—the *cultures* of the region. Out on its fringes, Pacific Pacifism would also embrace a paler Polynesian form of *négritude*.

As THE ethnic implications of Pacific Pacifism were sinking in, a broad reorientation of New Zealand attitudes was taking place. Western culture was put on the defensive, while a rather synthetic Polynesian culture became much admired. All in all this is hardly surprising. Doctrines which make a lot out of keeping a *region* pure and inviolate lend themselves to the notion of *cultural* purity as well. And whose cultures were the purest original cultures of the region—whose but those of the Pacific aborigines? Hitherto, New Zealanders had regarded themselves as Europeans, not Maori, in culture and allegiance. But that was in Old New Zealand. Today's New Zealanders are not so sure.

True, Maoris are less than 10 percent of the population. But the politics of ethnicity have nothing to do with statistics. They have to do with vast, shapeless grievances, with collective *amour propre*, with exploiting every opportunity for moral intimidation, and with throwing one's weight around. Above all they have to do with authenticity—and who but indigenes can qualify for that? Henceforth, therefore, historical Polynesia would be the test of the authentic. White settlement was to be seen as an aberration; white rule, a misfortune for which New Zealanders of British origin should pay. Corrective steps would have to be taken. Maori traditions would be revived at public expense. The Maori language would be taught in the public schools.

It seems to be felt that if the 90-percent white population agrees to these innovations, a quasi-Polynesian identity for New New Zealand, within the expanding realm of Pacific Pacifism, will be more secure. But what exactly is a Polynesian identity? Writes Keith Sinclair in *A History of New Zealand*:

Debate and war were the great excitements of the Maori public; and the greater of these was war. There was no finer way of acquiring *mana* than by seeking it, if not yet in the cannon's mouth, at least in the most dangerous position in the front of a phalanx. The Maoris were a military people. . . . There can have been few peoples in the world who took as great a delight in fighting or in stories of bloody deeds and heroism.

After the battle, the feast. A good fight provided abundant meat, and the Maori warrior, relaxing after a hard day in the field, was never happier than when thoughtfully gnawing on a human ham, or judiciously weighing the merits of cooked cadavers. This golden age of gourmet anthropophagy was remembered with interest and affection until quite recently. Only thirty years ago, while driving a car across New Zealand's Hauraki Plains, my two passengers fell into a bantering argument as to which tribe, his or hers, had eaten more of the other during their repeated 19th-century wars. As we passed one old grassy battlefield after another, the conjectural tally of victims rose higher and higher. At last it was amicably agreed that the tribe which had scored the higher would also have suffered severely from indigestion.

"MAN for war, and woman for the warrior's delight: all else is foolishness." So sang Nietzsche a century ago, and anyone can see that these lines were borrowed from the song of some Maori chief. They accurately express the ethos of a redoubtable people. But if this is so, how can you possibly adapt "traditional Maori culture" to the needs of the pacifistic white middle classes of New New Zealand today? The answer is simple: by a transvaluation of all values which quite denatures the original thing. The male and the warlike must be feminized; the ugly must be aestheticized; and the rank order of fighting chiefs, commoners, slaves, and cannibalized victims must be turned into a blandly smiling egalitarianism. What you might get, in short, is a cultural huddle of benign, tea-drinking,

Polynesian women, weaving Rugs for Peace, eating buttered scones, accompanied by a media outpouring of critical gush.

I can't vouch for the scones. But much else in this picture is suggested by last year's *Karanga Karanga* exhibition, as reported in the *Listener*, where one Maori women's collective "made a work concerned with what world leaders are giving us in the name of peace," while "a papier-mâché sculpture within a firebox as a symbol of hope . . . represented the feelings of Hinemoa Hilliard and Wendy Howe about nuclear war and its effects." Another group, described as "weaving matriarchs," was praised for "helping Maori women to value the fibers in our own cultural garden, a place which breathes the joy of a natural, finite, yet limitless world of tradition, independence, and creative weaving." Elsewhere, at the Fisher Gallery, "Forty Maori women exhibited work with much energy, creating spiritual vibrations which touched the thousands of visitors who made contact with the works, or simply looked with reverence."

Some 9,000 visitors felt the "spiritual vibrations" of this show, most of them, no doubt, the more sensitive members of New New Zealand's New Class. Sociology does not tell us the exact point at which it is prudent for a commercial bourgeoisie of small traders and manufacturers and store owners to drop all productive activity and devote itself to art. This is a pity, since in New New Zealand the move was almost certainly premature. The country positively swarms with artists, *soi-disant* artists, daubers and splashers, wood carvers and potters, and people weaving rugs of such bulk and texture that walking upon them is like crossing a plowed field. Entire hills of honest clay are relentlessly turned into ceramic sculpture, curiously shaped and glazed. And in parts of the Coromandel Peninsula no glen or gully is safe. Of course the attitude of the potters toward their brothers in the hole-digging business, the gold miners, is one of boundless contempt. At the township of Coromandel, violent demonstrations by clay-be-

spattered craftspeople—the invited television crews hovering close by—have now pretty well killed off the prospect of an economic revival of gold mining in this impoverished area.

Of all utopias, a community of artists—and especially a community of anarchistic, pacifistic artists—must be the least likely to succeed. Yet utopias of this sort are an important element in the mental make-up of New New Zealanders today. Throughout the country one is beckoned by hundreds of countercultural health centers, organic farms, and places for communal meditation. One may choose between having a rebirth at Rebirthing Wellington and being psychosynthesized at the Psychosynthesis Center. One may lunch at Calico Pie Wholefoods in Palmerston North, seek reassurance at the Human Potential Consulting Service in Wellington, or take a more radical course of therapy at the Selftransformation Center. Things have gone so far that California must surely be in danger of eclipse.

YET it would be a mistake to see this as a break with the past. In the first place, because it is largely the families of yesterday's nonconformist Protestant sects which provide recruits for today's nonconformist medical and/or meditation centers. In the second place, because of the vigorous tradition of colonial bohemianism. There should be nothing surprising about the latter. Literary and artistic bohemia stands at a self-consciously far remove from modernity, science, and industrial technique. But so does much of New Zealand, and that is why many settlers traveled from England in the 19th century right around the world to its savage shores.

The place and a romantic anti-modern temperament were well-matched. Also to be borne in mind are those characteristics of colonial society which bohemia, to its manifest advantage, sharply set itself against: the narrow world of the orthodox intellectuals (teachers and preachers), and the constraining ethos of the exiguous professional class. In contrast to these,

bohemia—noisy, drunken, colorful, wordy, defiant—had considerable romantic appeal: an appeal which in New Zealand was all the stronger for a touch of *nostalgie de la boue Polynésienne*.

The prevailing scheme of anti-industrial values meant that the pressure on students to drift into the more barren academic areas was strong. Bohemianized academics increased that pressure. Free higher education produced large numbers of demi-educated dabblers in art, anthropology, education, or social work, who emerged from their courses with little to show for them except an abiding scorn for washing behind the ears. Looking around at the social benefits provided by a generous government, and calculating the additional advantages of the benign climate, the beaches, and the surf, many found the attractions of welfare bohemianism irresistible.

The pickings were good, whatever your class or station—though little in the long history of blind good will can equal the continuing comedy of welfare idealism as it impinges on Maori life. Years ago, the announcement that the government would pay you simply for having children struck the average rural-dwelling Maori as odd. But having a healthy sense of self-interest, he soon learned to fill out the necessary forms, to modify them judiciously in ways which inflated his family size, and to collect as large a benefit as possible. The *pakeha* (white man) was a puzzle, but since he also had more money than sense, the wise course was to take whatever was offered and lie low.

Much the same enterprising playing of the welfare game has been highly profitable for Maori motorcycle gangs in recent years, though their most spectacular exploits may now be past:

The New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr. Lange, has put a stop to a social-welfare racket which has seen hundreds of thousands of dollars handed over to bike gangs in a failed bid to get them out of crime. Over the last few weeks, New Zealanders have been bombarded with amazing reports of gangs receiving huge sums from a government work

scheme for apparently doing very little.

The most outrageous disclosure came ten days ago, when it was revealed that a fence built by the Black Power gang in Christchurch last year at a cost of \$45,175 could have been completed by a regular private contractor for \$665. According to a confidential police report leaked to the media, another gang in nearby Timaru bought a vehicle with a \$6,560 government grant and used it to "commit various offenses."

Meanwhile in Dunedin, the Maori Affairs Department paid for new jacket patches for members of the local Mongrel Mob. . . . The report, prepared in an attempt to find out where the bike gangs were getting their money, said that since April 1985, \$800,000 worth of contracts had been awarded to gangs in Christchurch alone. Another \$656,000 was handed out in dole and sickness benefits. [Sydney *Morning Herald*, February 3, 1987]

Would a conservative government and the return of the National party make much difference? Probably not. The middle classes and their political leadership are in disarray. Perhaps it was merely personal eccentricity, yet it seems typical of the general confusion that during 1986 the ex-leader of the National party, Sir Robert Muldoon, appeared on stage in a production of *The Rocky Horror Show*. It was said to be just a joke—a one-week guest appearance only. But one could not help wondering why. Other prime ministers have lost their jobs without either seeking or accepting work like this. Of course having Miss Waring in one's own party, wailing on about nuclear Armageddon day and night, must have been a strain. Had a mental tendon snapped?

At Whitianga Harbor sunlight and shadow played on a choppy sea, under a rising wind. Clouds were racing north. Small boats battled their way into the first blasts of a southerly wind, heading for home. Here in the changing windswept colors of late afternoon was New Zealand at its pictorially dramatic best—"last, loneliest,

loveliest, exquisite, apart," Kipling had written—with Captain Cook's landfall, a sandy sheltered cove, only yards away. And lying not many miles beyond that, last July, stretched out on a bed in the seclusion of a comfortable resort, was a person whom it pleased one local paper to call a "nuke-flee mum to be," freshly arrived, all atremble, from Germany. "Trixie Hoffman flew to New Zealand almost two months ago, shortly after the Chernobyl nuclear power station disaster . . . 'I want to be sure

my baby will have food that is not dirty from the Chernobyl fallout,' she said." A dairy company, eager to get in on the act, had given her 40 kg. of their products, and Mrs. Hoffman, whose husband was arriving from Germany in a day or so, said she could hardly believe the company's generosity.

This nuke-flee mum is only one of many. And the migratory wave she represents has brought New Zealand back, full circle, to the place it held in the European consciousness fully a century ago. In

large part reacting against 19th-century industrialism, English settlers were drawn by the prospect of a pleasant pastoral alternative to soot in the eye, sweated labor, and dark satanic mills. Now the country is once more seen as a refuge, its remoteness an asset beyond price. Indeed in the minds of millions of Greens throughout Europe and America, the nearest thing to being on another planet is to be still on planet Earth and in New Zealand. "Far out!" they cry—and they're right.

The Fiction We Deserve

Carol Iannone

TO PARAPHRASE George Orwell on the English language, most people who bother with American fiction at all seem ready to admit that it is in a bad way. It is true, as the novelist Walker Percy has remarked, that the novel "always has been in a mess"; but it is also true, as Percy adds, that "the present mess is singular."

Recent articles in diverse journals have lamented, from a variety of viewpoints, the diminished state of contemporary fiction. Most of the attention has been focused on the shortcomings of what is often called, albeit not to everyone's satisfaction, minimalism: fiction that is thin in texture, slight in form, banal in subject matter, well-crafted, empty, easy to read—in short, literature for the age of television. Bruce Bawer observes of authors working in this mode that they

are inclined to write frequently in the present tense; to favor the short declarative sentence (*very* short and *very* declarative); to be preoccupied with domestic details (cooking, dishwashing, laundry), with the most banal of contemporary phenomena (TV commercials, trailer parks), and with brand names; to transmit clues to the nature of a protagonist's personal torments as dryly and emotionlessly as if those torments were just so many trite domestic details; and to think that surface details, if piled up high enough, can help us to see through to the heart.

The *Mississippi Review*, which has devoted an entire issue to the subject, chimes in that minimalism in literature is "loosely characterized by equanimity of surface, 'ordinary' subjects, recalcitrant narrators and deadpan narratives, slightness of story, and characters who don't think out loud."

Of course not every candidate for the minimalist label will display every characteristic in every work, and thus disagreement has arisen over who exactly fits the

mold. Writers broadly associated with this style, sometimes over their own or others' protests, include Raymond Carver, Ann Beattie, Bobbie Ann Mason, Richard Ford, Deborah Eisenberg, Jayne Anne Phillips, Peter Cameron, Amy Hempel. There are many others.

The fact that there now seems to be a consensus on the existence of a problem in contemporary fiction does not, however, imply a consensus as to its source. Walker Percy, for instance, argues that our impoverished fiction arises from the general surrender of the task of understanding human experience to scientists, technologists, and specialists. One critic, Sven Birkerts, sees in minimalism, and in contemporary literature generally, a "total refusal of any vision of larger social connection" and an "abrogation of literary responsibility." The writer Madison Bell, more practically, suggests that publishers have been striving to compete with the undemanding entertainments available through the mass media.

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These are all interesting and even compelling observations, but the most persistent and surely the most perverse analysis is the one that defines minimalism as, in the words of yet another critic, a "symptom of the neoconservative or Republican tide." The minimalists, remarks a second such commentator, "are stuck in complacency, stuck without convictions, without alternatives to offer, holding on defensively to a present they themselves don't believe in. This makes them, like their characters, emblematic of Reagan's America." According to a third critic belonging to this perverse persuasion: "What minimalism doesn't do is embrace grand, inexorable themes of the heart, or pressing social questions" such as "nuclear matters, growing social inequity, a base, shameless political administration, the unreality and immorality of daily life."

Probing for deeper causes, a fourth commentator opines that "minimalism reflects a human retreat, a breakdown of a shared conceptual system, a literary passivity in the face of moral confusion." And responding to the suggestion that readers like this fiction because they recognize themselves in it, this same commentator stiffly insists that

identification on the part of the reader is in this case not the psychological process of connection with an "other" to find shared human ground not previously recognized. Instead, it is the process of feeling connected to a character perceived to be entirely like ourselves, according to shared surface details. . . . The ironic part is that the surface is the level at which we are least like one another. . . . It's only when we go deeper that our resemblance to one another becomes apparent.

In even a casual observer of the recent cultural scene, such remarks are liable to inspire anything from bemusement to incredulity. After years of a Left-inspired literary criticism that attacked the possibility of narrative authority; the possibility of shared moral and cultural values in literature; the possibility of rendering a comprehensive world view in fiction; the pos-

sibility of conveying any definitive meaning whatsoever in literary texts; the possibility of even knowing reality itself through language—after all this, now we hear denunciations of "literary passivity," "moral confusion," and the "lack of a shared conceptual system." After years of assaults on literary standards as hierarchical and imperialistic; of assertions that a literary canon supposedly devised by white males could not reflect the experience of "marginal" groups; of vehement demands for a separate literary criticism to evaluate the work of women, of blacks, of homosexuals—after all this, now we are instructed that identification through "surface details" is spurious and that we need to go deeper to find "the shared human ground" where "our resemblance to one another becomes apparent."

What has happened? Literary radicals adopted a set of views that they believed would further the cause of revolution: since traditional literary standards were held to support the "system," it was believed that destroying these standards would help destroy the system. But the system, though perhaps shaken to the roots, nevertheless still seems to stand, and, what may be even worse, the radical views themselves have been "coopted" and defanged. Structuralism and deconstruction, the intellectual movements especially responsible for the systematic dismantling of traditional literary standards in recent years, have emerged as a kind of tired conventional wisdom. As the critic Walter Kendrick has reported, "Despite the potentially revolutionary nature" of this kind of criticism, "it has been absorbed without a jolt into the traditional American academic machine . . . would-be subversive ideas are to be memorized and applied, so that the student can publish in some unread academic journal, get a job, and perpetuate the inherited system."

But meanwhile, whatever is happening in the academy, the values promoted by the deconstructionist movement clearly helped lay the theoretical groundwork for the new minimalism. This type of fic-

tion is a grimly logical demonstration project for the "deconstruction" of literature's pretensions to meaning and range, of its claim to speak a higher and subtler language than that available in popular culture or everyday life. Our critics do not like the resulting dance, but it is they who helped call the tune. In their attack on the "cultural imperialism" of literary standards, leftist critics tore down the structures whereby even their own values could be given proper expression; evidently it is easier now to blame the wreckage they caused on Ronald Reagan than to begin the task of rebuilding.

INTERESTINGLY, the editors of two new collections of short stories both seem to share in the general disapproval surrounding contemporary fiction. In her introduction to *New American Short Stories: The Writers Select Their Own Favorites*,* Gloria Norris concedes that the American short story now suffers from predictability. And in his introduction to *Prize Stories: The O. Henry Awards 1986*,† William Abrahams echoes one of the common complaints against minimalism when he observes, "Consciously or not there seems to be on the part of many writers (and their teachers?) a tendency to overvalue technique, to run away from the possible serious content not only of the story but of life itself." While both editors claim that their collections deflect such complaints, a third to a half of each book is devoted to the work of writers who are at least sometimes associated with the minimalist school.

But what of the rest? Since minimalism has already absorbed so much critical energy and aroused so much critical disdain, it may be appropriate to focus on the other sorts of stories in these collections. For what it is worth, it turns out that social questions, although perhaps in muted forms, do continue to interest writers.

There are, for instance, several historical stories in these collections. David Long's "The Last

* New American Library, 372 pp., \$16.95.

† Doubleday, 274 pp., \$17.95.

Photograph of Lyle Pettibone," set in Montana in 1917, details the coming of age of a young man who rejects the values of his small town after he witnesses its brutal opposition to an IWW labor agitation. Peter Meinke's "Uncle George and Uncle Stefan" deals with the deterioration of an American family of Polish-German extraction ravaged by the conflicting loyalties aroused in them by World War II. In Anthony DiFranco's "The Garden of Redemption," a timid Italian priest finds the courage to resist the Nazis who occupy his town.

The problem with these historical stories, however, is their lack of urgency; they come to us as from a great safe distance. History in them has the quaintness of a reconstructed village, or the dusty reassuring earnestness of a memorial battlefield. In "The Garden of Redemption," for example, the priest begins to enjoy "the certainty that his death was right and useful. It didn't matter that no one would know what had become of him; he understood now the reckless sacrifices of the partisans, their lives thrown like stones beneath the treads of the Nazi bloodlust—not futile, no, but all part of a big fundamental struggle. . . ."

Or history can be a source of imaginative quotation, in the sketchy, self-centeredly nonserious way it is sometimes invoked in postmodern architecture. In Ward Just's "The Costa Brava, 1959," a young couple is on a holiday in Spain just after the wife has suffered a miscarriage. In a restaurant at the story's end, the wife, who is beginning to recover her sense of possibility, weaves "a dreamy narrative" about a Spanish couple nearby, sketching the man as "a romantic poet and playwright like Garcia Lorca, close to the Spanish people" and the woman as "a political, a young Pasionaria, a woman of character and resolve. They had been in love for ages," the wife imagines, "exiled together, now returned to Catalonia incognito." But her husband turns from this conversation to reflect that although "he had read all the books" on the Spanish war and

"Franco's hard-faced *paz*," he "could not imagine what it had been like in Catalonia. He had thought he knew but now, actually in the country, face to face with the people and the terrain, he had no idea at all." The sudden access into history seems to serve no purpose but to underscore the characters' different capacities for dealing with their present lives.

WHAT of contemporary issues? Stephanie Vaughan's "Kid Mac-Arthur" records the deleterious effects on a military family when a son goes to fight in Vietnam. Stuart Dybek's "Blight" is the story of a bunch of teen-age boys growing up in a lower-class Chicago neighborhood declared "blighted" during the Johnson administration's War on Poverty; the story has a refreshing twist, inasmuch as the boys are seen thoroughly enjoying the riches of their neighborhood that are imperceptible to the eyes of government bureaucracy. Alice Walker's "Kindred Spirits," winner of the first prize in the O. Henry awards, is the story of a disaffected and unhappy black woman visiting her family in Miami; it sketches the injustices of segregation, describes the physical brutality of black men and the emotional brutality of white men, endorses the Cuban revolution, and ends on a note of female solidarity between two sisters, albeit with a nod toward one of their male progenitors.

Feminism or at least a mild version of it is an impulse in other stories, too. Both "'I Don't Believe This,'" by Merrill Joan Gerber, and "Crazy Ladies," by Greg Johnson, deal with the emotional and physical abuse of women, as, on a different level, does Joyce Carol Oates's "Master Race" (the choice for the O. Henry special award for continuing achievement), about a prominent German-American intellectual and his younger woman companion on a visit to Germany.

Most of these stories are reasonable efforts and yet pretty forgettable. It is plain that an engagement with social issues *per se* is no guarantee of a distinguished and resonant fiction, if only because most social issues today come com-

plete with an a-priori interpretative context that converts them into instant clichés. This may be why some critics of minimalism are exercised less by its repudiation of social content than by its repudiation of formal inventiveness. But even they run into a contradiction, demanding an experimental fiction that will unmask the old pretensions of literature and then mourning the results for failing to resonate with wider significance. One story in the Norris collection, an ironic excursion into experimental fiction by John E. Wideman entitled "Surfiction," seems almost to be pointing to this very contradiction.

Two of the more satisfying efforts in these collections manage to suggest a social context without at the same time succumbing to it. John Updike's finely polished "Made in Heaven" is about a long-term marriage that grows materially but shrinks emotionally; Updike charts a social background, but finally goes beyond it to a vision of individual spiritual loneliness. In Elizabeth Spencer's Whartonesque "The Cousins," two middle-aged cousins sit in a terrace restaurant in Rome and reminisce about the past, particularly a European vacation they took one summer in their youth. An interesting delineation emerges of different types of character among the Southern aristocracy, but the story is really about the inscrutable nature of the past. On the other hand, Mary Hood's hard little nugget of a story, "Solomon's Seal," which encapsulates forty years in the painfully ugly marriage of a pair of rural Southerners, makes no particular effort to engage a social context, although the backwoods milieu is well evoked, but becomes instead an effective study of selfishness, stubbornness, and pride.

"ART is in most ways hostile to ideology," Joan Didion (who has served both masters) rightly observes, and ideology is most definitely hostile to art. If we continue to insist that literature fight our revolutions, then we will continue to get the fiction we deserve.

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Books in Review

A Special People

A HISTORY OF THE JEWS. By PAUL JOHNSON. *Harper & Row*. 644 pp. \$25.00.

Reviewed by MARTIN GILBERT

PERHAPS inevitably in our current decade, the vast preponderance of historical writing about the Jews has focused on the Holocaust: its origins, its course, and its implications. Since 1980, the whole globe of Jewish history has seemed to tilt increasingly on a Holocaust axis. It would be absurd to make this a complaint; what we now call the Holocaust has scarred, and will continue to scar, the Jewish consciousness, and will do so to such an extent that many students of universal Jewish themes, myself included, have already neglected, and will go on neglecting, the wider historical and cultural spheres for this one. It is for that reason as much as any that Paul Johnson's new book is to be welcomed. It covers 4,000 years of Jewish history, and although it devotes 10 percent to the five years of the Holocaust, the remaining 90 per cent, in its bold sweep from biblical times to today, is a powerful reminder of Jewish achievement throughout the ages.

I use the word "achievement" deliberately, for Paul Johnson is emphatically not of the school of Sir Lewis Namier, professor of history at Manchester University, England, who, when asked by a non-Jewish admirer why, as a Jew, he did not write books about Jewish history, replied: "There is no such thing as Jewish history, only Jewish

martyrology—and that is not amusing enough for me."

Paul Johnson does not neglect the martyrological aspects: Rome, the Crusades, the Inquisition, Chmielnicki, the czarist pogroms, all are here. He strives, however, and in my view successfully, to go beyond the grim episodes of destruction to the rich continuity of creativity. Indeed, from a study of that creativity in its widest aspects (in which Maimonides, Heine, Freud, and Einstein each have an honored and thoughtful place in his narrative), he seeks an answer to the central question of Jewish survival, of the continued existence of the Jews as a recognized group which, despite its relatively small size numerically, has retained its characteristics and identity throughout so many centuries of diversity and dispersal. Johnson veers away from the presentation of Jewish history as "a succession of climaxes and catastrophes." Instead, he sees that history, and tries where possible to present it, as "an endless continuum of patient study, fruitful industry, and communal routine, much of it unrecorded." The historian should bear in mind, he adds, that "Sorrow finds a voice while happiness is mute." This is a salutary remark even for those who write exclusively about the Holocaust.

Johnson draws many universal themes from the Jewish experience. Yet he is careful not to exaggerate the unanimity or even the coherence of Jewish thought. In connection with the emancipatory and cultural revolution at the turn of the last century, for example, he points out that "There was no Jewish world-outlook, let alone a plan to impose modernism on the world." It is therefore a pity, it seems to me, that in the section on the Holocaust Johnson portrays the response of the Jews as specific and unique to them: "Their history, their theology, their folklore, their social structures, even their vocabulary trained them to negoti-

ate, to pay, to plead, to protest, not to fight."

It could be argued with equal force that the Jewish response to Nazi rule was no different from that of all captive peoples: most were cowed, all sought to survive, and when survival by compliance or the passage of time proved impossible, all sought to resist with whatever limited means were at their disposal. The Jews in Warsaw, for example, did so sixteen months before the Poles of that same city, and did so because of the extinction threatening them. Both Jews and Poles knew the essential hopelessness of revolt. To say that it was the Jews who had "learned from long experience that resistance cost lives rather than saved them" is, in my view, too narrow a conclusion: almost every human being under occupation acted in this way. Jews had no special prescription on passivity.

Yet it would be churlish, as some reviewers of the British edition of this book have done, to pick up such errors of fact or interpretation, or to stress particular gaps in the facts, in order to seek to undermine or even to diminish the force and value of the book as a whole. It was Churchill who once said: "I do not come before you as an expert, but as one accustomed to listening to the views of experts." Paul Johnson could certainly benefit from another decade of reading and debate—who could not? But in the time at his disposal since he completed his histories of Christianity, of the modern world, and of the English people—a remarkable trilogy—he has read as widely and absorbed as deeply as any man could, adding his own philosophical outlook as well as an enviable clarity of phrase and theme.

Of course there are mistakes of fact and emphasis; it is certainly untrue, for example, to write of Polish Jewry that by 1939, "the most energetic, adventurous, and above all the most militant, had

MARTIN GILBERT is the official biographer of Winston Churchill. His recently published *Winston S. Churchill: Road to Victory, 1941-1945* is the seventh volume in the series. He has also written many works on Jewish history, including *The Jews of Hope*, *Shcharansky: Hero of Our Time*, and *The Holocaust*.

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gone to Palestine." Such mistakes are minor, however, compared with the wider grasp of Jewish history which the author's humanistic outlook gives him. This outlook is philo-Semitic in its most profound sense. "The Jewish vision," Johnson writes on his second page, "became the prototype for many similar grand designs for humanity, both divine and man-made. The Jews, therefore, stand right at the center of the perennial attempt to give human life the dignity of a purpose."

After 580 pages of history, that verdict is upheld and enhanced. "No people has been more fertile," Johnson concludes, "in enriching poverty or humanizing wealth, or in turning misfortune to creative account." This capacity springs, he argues, from a moral philosophy "both solid and subtle, which has changed remarkably little over the millennia." In past centuries, Johnson asserts, the great Jewish achievement was "the application of reason to divinity." In recent, more secular, centuries, the Jews applied these same principles of rationality "to the whole range of human activities, often in advance of the rest of mankind."

These "principles of rationality" mean much to Paul Johnson. They are the very principles which he has striven to follow during a thoughtful but often provocative career as a journalist and political guide. Thirty years ago, as editor of the *New Statesman*, he espoused with vigor the viewpoint of the Left in British politics; I was among thousands whose attitudes were molded and whose consciousness was sharpened by his journalism. More recently, he has become an eloquent apostle of the Right—or, rather, of the right of the individual and the rule of law, of self-help, self-assertion, and liberty; here too I have followed his advocacy, as have many others. It is therefore fascinating for me to see the part played by Jewish concepts in so much of our mutual journey, or at least the way in which Paul Johnson, himself a Catholic, uses these Jewish concepts and is inspired by them.

EVERY reader will form his own

view as to the centrality of rationality in Jewish thought and practice, as portrayed by Johnson. The section on Maimonides, one of the longest in the book devoted to a single person, is essential to Johnson's perspective. "The more stable and peaceful we make our society," Johnson writes in his two-sentence summary of the thought of Maimonides, "the more time and energy men have for improving their minds, so that in turn they have the intellectual capacity to effect further social improvements. So it goes on—a virtuous circle, instead of the vicious circle of societies which have no law."

In Paul Johnson's world, the rule of law is a vital ingredient to society as it ought to be. That the Jews should have so embraced and indeed enhanced it gives him a feeling of closeness to them, first as precursors and then as maintainers of the one sane ideology. He is doubly drawn to the 12th-century philosopher because of what he sees as the principal desire of Maimonides "for the law, the sword and armor of the Jews, to become the working property of all of them."

That this did not happen to all Jews, or attract all Jews, does not deter Johnson from his admiration of the rational mold of Jewish thought. He sees clearly, and describes clearly, the power of the irrational on medieval minds beset with fear and misery. ("For the mass of ordinary Jews," he writes, "tales of miracles past, hope of those to come, was a surer comfort in time of trouble.") Nor does Johnson mock Jewish mysticism; indeed, his pages about it are as tolerant as the pen that has written them. But in his perspective it is the virtue of the Jews to triumph over mysticism in the end.

Mistakes were made during the course of this triumph: Marx, according to Johnson, was the greatest of those mistakes. Still, in Johnson's panorama the Jews redeemed themselves by their own exertions, of which, for him, Zionism is the 20th century's most praiseworthy example. He thus describes with approval the dream of Moses Hess that the Jews would achieve their own redemption "not by Marx's

negative proposal to destroy their traditional economic functions, but by the positive act of creating an ideal state." The creation of that state is set out in considerable detail in its ideological, political, diplomatic, and military phases, and with due weight given to the critical forces within the Jewish world at the time of Zionism's birth, and in the Arab world two decades later.

READERS not well versed in the story may find the detail a little daunting, but it is well worth persevering. In the sections on Zionism Johnson impresses me most by the way in which he has dug out and breathed life into many figures now largely forgotten, among them Arthur Ruppin, who was, he writes, "a sociologist, economist, and statistician by training and he brought this somber but necessary combination of qualities, plus huge industry, persistence, and a grim understanding of Jewish failings, to the business of turning the Zionist idea into a practical reality." More than anyone else, Johnson writes of Ruppin, "he was responsible for the nuts and bolts, the bread and butter, of the new home."

One may certainly learn from this quotation, if only of Ruppin's existence and stature. But one may also see in it a perhaps inevitable weakness in such a vast and at times necessarily cryptic canvas: there is simply no space for further details of Ruppin's early work in Palestine, and no space for his later, changing, views of Arab-Jewish cooperation. Indeed, there are only two further brief quotations from Ruppin, the first about Herbert Samuel as British High Commissioner in Palestine ("a traitor to the Jewish cause"), the second a remark by Ruppin in connection with Jewish crime in America in the era of Prohibition ("Christians commit crimes with their hands, the Jews use their reason").

Personally, I would have welcomed a substantial paragraph on Ruppin's "nuts and bolts" in Palestine. There can, however, be few, if any, accounts of Zionism written by a non-Jew which, for all their brevity, give so factually grounded an accolade to that once noble

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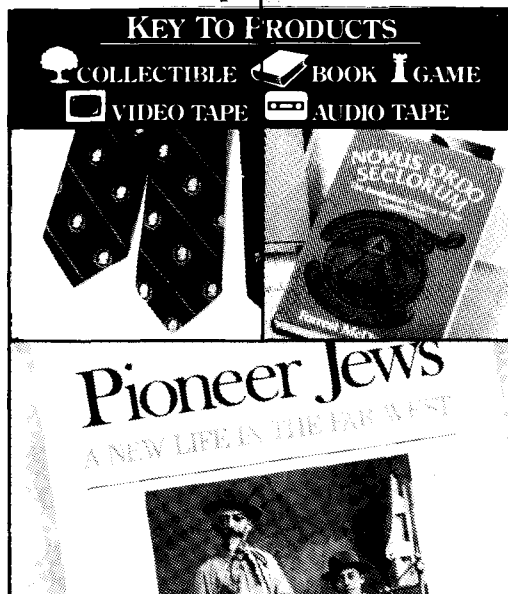


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"ism" which the United Nations has declared a form of "racism," and which is often condemned without trial, as in the recent London play *Perdition*. Against that play, incidentally, Paul Johnson wrote, at the height of the controversy in London: "The tragic Jewish past repeatedly shows that the fabrication of anti-Jewish myths nearly always, in the end, costs Jewish blood. That is why it was right to prevent the performance of this play in a famous and honorable British theater, and why it will continue to be right to forestall any similar affronts to truth and justice."

TRUTH and justice are not mere catch-phrases for Johnson; they are his philosophical life blood and his link with the Jewish struggle. It is here that he sees Zionism as more than a mere nationalism. Yet he is no starry-eyed propagandist. The dilemma of the Jewish commonwealths in antiquity, he writes, was to try to combine "the moral excellence of a theocracy with the practical demands of a state capable of defending itself." This dilemma has been "recreated in our own time in the shape of Israel, founded to realize a humanitarian ideal, discovering in practice that it must be ruthless simply to survive in a hostile world." But is not this, he asks, a recurrent problem which affects all human societies? And he goes on to write: "We all want to build Jerusalem. We all drift back toward the Cities of the Plain. It seems to be the role of the Jews to focus and dramatize these common experiences of mankind, and to turn their particular fate into a universal moral."

There then follows the final question of Johnson's book. "But if the Jews have this role," he asks, "who wrote it for them?" His answer may surprise those who see, or who seek, a guiding hand over and above the human one. The Jews did indeed have a role, Johnson concludes, "because they wrote it for themselves"; they believed that they were a special people "with such unanimity and passion, and over so long a span, that they became one."

Letting the Chips Fall?

THE FITZGERALDS AND THE KENNEDYS: AN AMERICAN SAGA. By DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN. *Simon & Schuster*. 932 pp. \$22.95.

Reviewed by KENNETH S. LYNN

THE author of *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*, an ambitious work of more than 900 pages spanning a hundred years of family history, from the baptism in Boston in 1863 of John Francis Fitzgerald, the infant son of an immigrant Irishman and his second-generation Irish-American wife, to the presidential inauguration in Washington in 1961 of John Fitzgerald's forty-three-year-old grandson and namesake, simply cannot stop talking about the cooperation she has received from the current generation of leadership in the Kennedy family.

She is grateful, Doris Kearns Goodwin writes in the preface to her book, "to Senator Edward M. Kennedy and the Kennedy family, who permitted me to examine the papers of Joseph P. Kennedy and Rose F. Kennedy without ever asking to see a page of what I had written." In recent publicity sessions with the press she has also been pleased to recall her surprise, indeed her amazement, at Senator Kennedy's alacrity in granting her access to the 150 cartons of unprocessed and uncatalogued materials about his parents which suddenly turned up at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston in 1981, and at the willingness of all the Kennedy elders to allow her to make whatever use she wished of the old diaries, letters, tax returns, canceled checks, travel vouchers, and other memorabilia that the cartons proved to contain. How very sporting of the Kennedys to tell an author in effect to let the chips fall where they may! How oddly out of sync, one is forced to add, with the family's

traditional treatment of writers.

Apropos of John F. Kennedy's presidential news conferences, the Chicago *Daily News's* Washington bureau chief, Peter Lisagor, once observed on an oral-history tape that Kennedy successfully conned the reporters who covered him into serving as

spear carriers for a televised opera. We were props in a show, in a performance. Kennedy mastered the art of this performance early, and he used it with great effectiveness. . . . I always felt that we [reporters] should have joined Actors Equity. Those of us who asked questions should have charged that much extra for speaking lines.

Although the New York *Times's* Arthur Krock had done unusual favors for years for Joseph P. Kennedy, he was finally so angered by the Kennedy administration's ceaseless efforts to manage the news that in March 1963 he publicly characterized those efforts as a series of "direct and deliberate actions . . . enforced more cynically and more boldly than by any other previous administration." A month later, Krock's fellow *Times* man, Hanson Baldwin, lodged a similar complaint, citing the administration's "astonishing examples of news repression and distortion, management and control, pressures and propaganda."

For decades before his son became President, Joseph P. Kennedy had been equally given to treating writers with contempt, to seducing them if possible, to threatening them if necessary, and always for the purpose of inflating his family's achievements and keeping its secrets dark. So that Jack's awkwardly composed senior thesis at Harvard, "Appeasement at Munich: The Inevitable Result of the Slowness of the British Democracy to Change from a Disarmament Policy," could be merchandised as a book called *Why England Slept* (1940), Ambassador Kennedy ordered the young speechwriter he had brought with him to London, Harvey Klemmer, to take a look at the manuscript that Jack was still struggling to expand and improve. In the 1980's, Klemmer would recall that

KENNETH S. LYNN teaches history at Johns Hopkins. His critical study of Ernest Hemingway's life and work will be published next month by Simon & Schuster.

I worked two weeks on it, night and day, delivered it at four o'clock in the morning on the day that Eddie Moore [the Ambassador's right-hand man] was to go to New York and take it to the publisher. When I got it, it was a mishmash, ungrammatical. He had sentences without subjects and verbs. It was a very sloppy job, mostly magazine and newspaper clippings stuck together. I edited it, and put in a little peroration at the end.

As a final touch, Joe Kennedy persuaded the *Time* empire's Henry Luce to write a foreword to the book—which eventually sold 40,000 copies and made its young author a celebrity.

Old Joe also knew how to suppress unwanted publicity. When he was shown an advance copy of a long and unfavorable story about him by an ambitious young writer named Earle Looker that was scheduled to appear in *Fortune* in September 1937, Kennedy brutally denounced it to the managing editor of the magazine, Russell Davenport, as "the brainchild of a psychopathic case," at which point the intimidated Davenport told him he would kill the piece, despite the considerable trouble and expense that the decision entailed.

Getting the story put about that his mentally defective daughter Rosemary—whom he ultimately had lobotomized without consulting his wife—was just a shy young woman with an interest in working in secluded circumstances with retarded children was another of the senior Kennedy's public-relations triumphs. So too was the disinformation campaign he masterminded in support of the idea that the curiously sickly Jack was subject to recurrent attacks of the malaria he had contracted during the war in the Pacific, whereas actually he was engaged in desperate battles with Addison's disease.

Joe's views about publicity were eagerly adopted by younger family members. In the aftermath of John Kennedy's assassination, the martyred President's old friend "Red" Fay completed an anecdotal book about him to which he gave the genial title, *The Pleasure of His Company*. Thanks to the lengthy interview they arranged

with Fay, Peter Collier and David Horowitz would be able to reveal in *The Kennedys: An American Drama* (1984) that the poor fellow was immediately subjected to reprimand by Jacqueline Kennedy, to whom he had courteously showed the manuscript, for his "locker-room humor," while Robert Kennedy coldly insisted he cut the memoir by two-thirds, on the grounds that what he had written about Jack was personally disrespectful and therefore diminished him as President. Although Fay duly eliminated 90,000 words, Bobby was far from satisfied and threatened to go to court to block the publication of the book. Only by standing his ground did Fay discover that the bully was bluffing.

Bobby did file suit, however, against William Manchester, to restrain him from publishing advance excerpts in *Look* magazine of *The Death of a President* (1967), after Jackie found the manuscript disturbingly full of "private things," even though she herself had chosen Manchester to

tell the story. In a swarming action, Manchester was hounded from several directions at once by Richard Goodwin (now the husband of Doris Kearns) and three other guardians of the Kennedy myth, John Siegenthaler, Burke Marshall, and Ed Guthman, all of whom called upon the beleaguered author either to agree to make hundreds of textual changes or to abandon the book altogether. At one point, Bobby personally applied the Kennedy muscle by appearing outside the hotel room to which Manchester had retreated and pounding on the door and yelling threats. In the end, Manchester consented to a few changes and the suit was dropped.

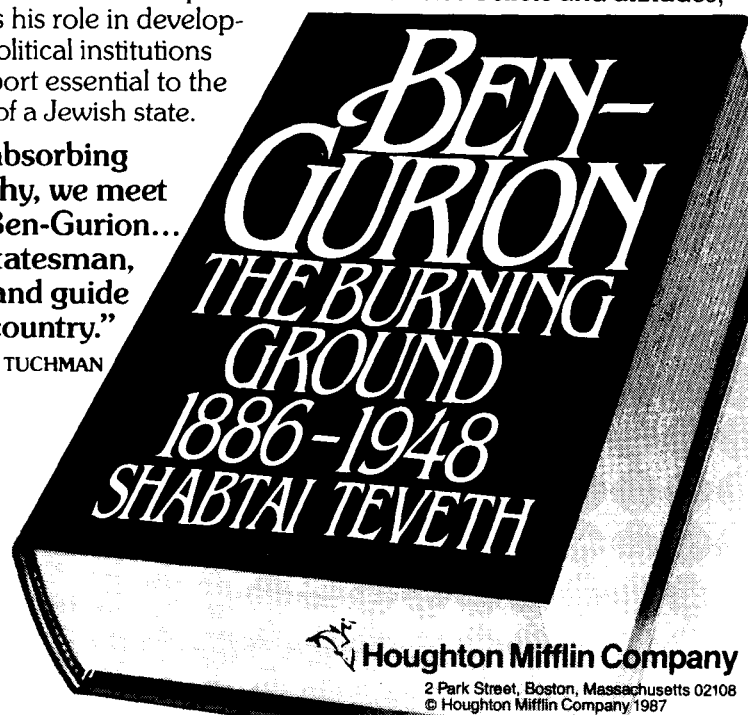
As for Collier and Horowitz, they discovered early on in their investigations into the history of the Kennedy dynasty that another historian, Doris Kearns Goodwin, had embarked on similar research. Collier and Horowitz did not, however, regard her work as a threat to theirs—until, that is, it became apparent to them that the

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Kennedy family's open-door policy toward Mrs. Goodwin would most definitely not be extended to them.

In the preface to *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*, Mrs. Goodwin had an obligation to her readers to spell out her political relationship with the Kennedys. The standards of literary propriety evidently mean very little to her, however, as she demonstrated in different terms eleven years ago when she promoted her first book, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, by speaking of her friendship with Johnson in ways that encouraged sensational rumors about it. Although Mrs. Goodwin is at pains in her preface to present a touching picture of herself in the Concord, Massachusetts, Public Library, where, day after day and year after year, "I sat . . . writing this book in longhand, in the warmth and beauty of the wood-paneled reading room," she says not a word about leaving the library from time to time during 1980 in order to work as a speechwriter for and adviser to Teddy Kennedy as he set out to unhorse Jimmy Carter as the presidential nominee of the Democratic party.

Her prefatory remarks about her husband, to whom the book is dedicated, are likewise blemished by disingenuous reticence. "I reserve my deepest thanks for my husband, Richard Goodwin, who conceived the idea for this book a decade ago, and who helped me through every single day of labor." That Richard Goodwin first went to work for John Kennedy in the late 1950's and remained with him until he died, that he deserted Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign in 1968 upon hearing that Bobby Kennedy had announced his own candidacy, that he raced to Teddy Kennedy's side in the tumultuous aftermath of Mary Jo Kopechne's precipitation into the drowning pool, are among the choice details about his career that Mrs. Goodwin never mentions.

LET the chips fall where they may. In *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*, that never happens. By one device or another, the fall of the chips is invariably gentled and smoothed. Thus, in a passage that

has already become familiar through quotation by other reviewers, we are told that the "truth" about Joe

is that he united in his person both inexorable self-will and the capacity for deep attachment, both appalling ruthlessness and unswerving fidelity; the images jostle one another, yet are part of the same complicated character. Deficient in civility, he could be the most disagreeable man in the world; unbounded by convention, his crudeness would betray others again and again. However, when the gates of his passions were opened for those he loved, the love he received in return was past the size of dreaming. Let the world classify him a blackguard, so long as his family and his friends ranked him a king.

Stylistically, this passage has a very high polish. Its diction is grand, its tone lofty, its rhythms powerful. Argumentatively, it is as slick as oil. While huge faults in Joe are readily acknowledged—and how could they be avoided?—a case for the defense is adroitly pleaded at every turn.

Another artful paragraph on a sensitive subject begins:

While we may never know the true nature of Joe Kennedy's feelings toward the Jews, one thing is clear. In the late 30's, his passion for peace . . . was so overriding that he was willing to sacrifice almost anything to achieve it.

If that statement seems reasonable within the context of the book, it is because the book contains none of the evidence which conclusively defines Joe's feelings about Jews, such as his declaration to Harvey Klemmer at lunch at Claridge's in 1940, on the eve of his final departure from England as the American Ambassador, that he was going home to tell the American people that "Roosevelt and the kikes were taking us into war."

IN THE presentation of Rose Kennedy, we get a different example of how Mrs. Goodwin smooths the fall of the chips. Here is a passage describing the decision Rose reached in the winter of 1920 to

go back to Joe after leaving him and after her father told her sternly that she had exchanged solemn vows with her husband and that she must honor them:

Galvanized by the authority in her father's voice, Rose began thinking more sharply than she had done for weeks. Of course she could make things work. She always had managed and she always would. It was just a matter of accepting her own needs and then reorganizing the household so that she could create definite goals for herself and have a clear vision of what she hoped to accomplish with her family. It was a question of accepting that her own desire to grow and learn deserved expression, just as surely as that of her children. There must be a way, she determined, of doing with the children what she herself enjoyed, of sharing with them her love of history and travel, of politics and ritual; there must be a way to encourage the children into activities which would allow her to grow as well.

Although Mrs. Goodwin would have us believe that she is faithfully reproducing Rose's thought processes, she has actually taken off into a flight of anachronistic fancy. Far from making Rose sound like a woman of the 1920's, she has transformed her into a post-feminist heroine of the 1980's, whose philosophy of life is bounded on the one hand by her commitment to her family and on the other by an insistence on "having her own space," as Mrs. Goodwin has the lack of literary taste to remark a few pages later. Shifting to hilariously stupid historical clichés, the author goes on to say that it was Rose's fate to live "in the shadow of the disintegrating 20's—the dizzying decade of flappers and bootleggers, of sensuous music, scandals, and fads," when "the modern American family was seen to be in a state of collapse." Unfazed, however, by the historical odds against her, Rose pitted her strength and determination against "the pressures of moral and social drift" by making a "profession" out of raising her children, while at the same time "keeping intact a mysterious region of her soul

into which she did not consider it necessary to admit them."

The inanity of Mrs. Goodwin's celebration of Rose for resisting the "disintegrating" trends of her time is not merely restricted to its simplistic formulations about American life in the 1920's. Just as Mrs. Goodwin drastically underestimates the persistence of traditional family values among most American women of the period, so she does not adequately reckon with the self-centeredness that made Rose such a "modern" mother, after all. Pseudo-poetic reference to a "mysterious region" of Rose's "soul" to which her children were denied admission hardly begins to describe—and offers no way of explaining—the poisonous incapacity to give her children the love they needed that would some day cause her son Jack to say, "My mother is a nothing," and that would prompt her daughter Kathleen to confess to a boyfriend, "Listen, the thing you ought to know is that I'm like Jack, incapable of deep affection." (While both of these quotes appear in the Collier and Horowitz book, it is significant that neither of them is cited in *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*, although the book does offer some paler examples of the same pathological results.)

A benevolent censorship has likewise been applied to old Joe's womanizing, and to Jack's as well. While we hear at length about Joe's glamorous affair with Gloria Swanson, all the disgusting stuff, such as his attempt to sleep with the Danish-born blonde, Inga Arvad, with whom Jack was sleeping, has been thoughtfully edited out. Similarly in Jack's case, abstract reference is made to the pace of his sex life, but it is underdramatized. For knowledge of the collegiate letters to his friend LeMoyne Billings which spell out so lamentably his everlasting compulsion to talk about fornication, one has to turn, once again, to Collier and Horowitz. "Whether or not he [an old schoolmate] screwed her," runs a representative missive, "she got quite a scare when I gave it to her. . . . However I couldn't feel any maiden-head and she is quite sexy."

If one wants to know the reason (it was a spectacular-looking blonde) why Jack was cruising on a yacht in the Mediterranean when Jackie was giving birth to a still-born baby in a Newport, Rhode Island hospital, one will not learn it from the section of *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys* that begins, "The trip was poorly timed." And the treaty that Joe Kennedy brokered with Jackie in order to dissuade her from leaving Jack and spoiling his chances for the Presidency is also overlooked in this cleverly selective book which John Kenneth Galbraith has had the nerve to hail as "the definitive work; no one need ever do it again."

DROPPING embarrassing facts down the memory hole is one way to get rid of them; another is to bring up, in as minimal a fashion as possible, various "questions" that have been raised over the years about the Kennedys and then move on without passing judgment

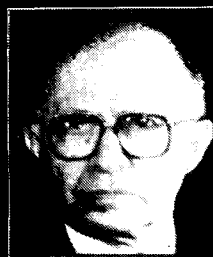
upon their justness. Thus, toward the end of the account of the writing, the publication by Harper and Brothers, and the smashing success of John F. Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* (1956), an ugly contretemps that the Kennedys never anticipated is alluded to with exquisite brevity:

In the years to come, questions would arise about the extent of Jack's authorship of the book, given the substantial help and guidance he received from staff members and historians who prepared the material on which the book was based and who wrote drafts for most of the chapters.

In this account, the names of Kennedy's literary alter ego, Theodore Sorensen, and of his historical brain-truster, Professor Jules Davids of Georgetown University, are not so much as breathed. No reference is made to the furor created by the suggestion John Oakes of the *New York Times* put to Harper editor Simon Michael

The making of a peacemaker.

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DOUBLEDAY

Bessie at the Century Club in New York that according to "strong rumor" Kennedy had not really written the book. And the devastating demonstration from textual evidence in Herbert S. Parmet's *Jack: The Struggles of John F. Kennedy* (1980) that Kennedy was the overseer of the book but not its author, is likewise ignored, as is Parmet's further conclusion that

At the working level, research, tentative drafts, and organizational planning were left to committee labor, with such talents as Professor Davids making key contributions. But the burdens of time and literary craftsmanship were clearly Sorensen's, and he gave the book both the drama and the flow that made for readability.

In an interview with Cathryn Donohoe of the *Washington Times*, Mrs. Goodwin was asked about the absence of Sorensen's name from her narrative. She began her answer by speaking of her personal acceptance of the fact that "when you look at the materials in the raw [of *Profiles in Courage*], that Sorensen had done a majority of the work." But at this late point in the story, she went on to explain, her research was past the point of originality, and she had to rely on secondary sources:

I mean, as I say, I thought I was being critical. I didn't intend not to, 'cause I came away feeling that way. I just didn't have anything original to contribute to the argument.

Let the chips fall where they may, indeed.

In the Beginning

ARMED TRUCE: THE BEGINNING OF THE COLD WAR 1945-1946. By HUGH THOMAS. *Atheneum*. 667 pp. \$27.50.

Reviewed by DONALD KAGAN

MORE than four decades have passed since the end of World War II and the beginning of what

DONALD KAGAN is Richard M. Colgate Professor of Classics at Yale. His "World War I, World War II, World War III" appeared in our March issue.

we call the cold war that arose from it, yet the origins of the cold war and the responsibility for it remain the subject of serious controversy. That is understandable: the world in which we live has been largely shaped by the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the great issues of our time are related to that conflict. The interpretation of the causes of the cold war and of what some see as the failure to seize an opportunity to establish a true and lasting peace has therefore become a battleground, from which emerge justifications for one position or another in regard to the persistent conflict.

Those who place responsibility on the Soviet Union, seeing the cause of the cold war in the revolutionary imperialism of Stalin and the Soviet leaders who followed him, thereby justify America's policy of resistance and containment resting on a strong political and diplomatic alliance of free nations and on a powerful military force as a deterrent to Soviet aggression. Those who take a different view of the Soviet Union and the Communist movement, or see America's role in the world today as malign, place the blame for the cold war on the United States, whether because of its insensitivity to the needs and feelings of the Soviet Union, or because of some irrational hatred of Communism, or because of the inherently expansive, even imperialistic, character they attribute to capitalism.

The first interpretation dominated American thinking until the 1960's, when a wave of left-wing revisionism began to argue for the second. The 1970's saw the appearance of a number of post-revisionist studies that undermined most of the left-wing arguments without reverting to the earlier interpretation. The impression they gave is that there is some blame on both sides. Post-revisionism had a much smaller impact on the popular mind than did revisionism. It also has failed to take powerful hold in the academic world. My impression is that courses treating the cold war in most of the major universities in

America today are taught mainly from the revisionist perspective, somewhat modified by the post-revisionist view. The earlier interpretation is rarely, if ever, presented favorably—to say nothing of a variant common in the 1950's that blamed the United States, not for causing the cold war by excessive suspicion and toughness, but for allowing it to develop because of undue softness toward the Soviets that encouraged their aggression.

Students at universities typically emerge with generally revisionist assumptions that, to a considerable degree, shape their attitudes toward the problems and policies of our own day. The situation is similar to the one following World War I, when a revisionism that blamed that war not on Germany but on British and American "merchants of death" carried the day, dominated the thinking of a generation, and provided the basis for an isolationism that crippled the Western democracies and prevented them from resisting the growing menace of Italian Fascist, Nazi, and Japanese aggression.

SUCH historical disputes, therefore, are not merely "quarrels between monks" but have great political importance. That is why there is reason to welcome Hugh Thomas's great undertaking, a multivolume history of the cold war, of which the first volume has now appeared. It is very much in the tradition of the first interpretation, bolstered, however, by the mass of evidence that has come to light since the debate got under way. That debate has always been deformed, and to some degree will continue to be, by the vast disparity between the huge supply of evidence available on the Western side and the pitiful scraps of reliable information as to what Stalin and the Soviet Union were doing and thinking. Every fleeting and half-baked notion held by an American official shows up in somebody's diary to be seized on by revisionists as evidence of one evil design or another. From the Kremlin we have nothing but official propaganda or silence.

Thomas has the advantage over

his predecessors of the valuable evidence provided by the revelations of Stalin's accomplice and eventual successor Nikita Khrushchev, by Stalin's daughter Svetlana Alliluyeva, and by his one-time confidant, the Yugoslav Communist Milovan Djilas, among others. These help redress the balance, and the result is a much fuller and fairer account of the thoughts and actions of the decision-makers on both sides than has been available in a single place.

The interpretation that emerges firmly places the blame for the conflict on the Soviet Union. Thomas sees Stalin's Soviet Union as "a nation which aspired to world influence if not hegemony," propelled by a combination of traditional Russian imperialism and Marxist-Leninist ideology, the two not contradictory but supporting each other. The chief cause of the conflict, however, he finds in the Communist ideology held by Stalin and those around him, which made them not so much unwilling as unable to come to terms with their former allies. Thomas places great emphasis on a statement made by Maxim Litvinov, former Soviet Foreign Minister, in June 1946. The root of the conflict, Litvinov said, was "the ideological conception prevailing here [in Moscow] that the conflict between Communist and capitalist worlds was inevitable." If the West were to make all the concessions demanded, "It would lead to the West being faced, in a more or less short time, with the next series of demands."

Such an interpretation renders irrelevant any questions about British and American actions. Readers, therefore, who look for detailed, point-by-point refutations of revisionist arguments will be disappointed. From time to time, and especially in the brief concluding chapter, Thomas rebuts some of these without taking on their authors directly and by name, but from the perspective he uses in this book they are beside the point.

This approach is probably a tactical mistake. Readers who begin by being disinclined to accept Thomas's general interpreta-

tion, and they will be many, would benefit greatly from the specific, well-documented critiques he is well qualified to make. As it stands, this book runs the risk of preaching only or chiefly to the converted and ignoring the infidel. If that is the result it would be a great pity. Though it is a long, sprawling, not perfectly organized volume that cries out for more careful editing, a bibliography, and more helpful footnotes, it nevertheless offers an account of the origins of the cold war that is intelligent, persuasive, and full of information and understanding that needs to be known and absorbed by many readers, regardless of the prejudices they bring to it.

PERHAPS the most useful part, because its subject is so little known, is Book Three, "Disputed Lands," in which Thomas offers a survey of how the postwar settlement came into being in the lands between the two great powers, from

Poland to China, Japan, Korea, and Indochina. History, local conditions, the presence or absence of the Red Army, all help explain why some places fell under Stalin's sway and others did not, but a general pattern emerges. The Soviet Union never failed to pursue its interests in the world of power politics, unless prevented by circumstances beyond its control.

Stalin, like Clausewitz, perfectly understood that the purpose of war is the extension of a nation's political power and influence. When, as in Greece, Stalin allowed the British to prevail and chose not to support the Greek Communists, it was as part of a quid pro quo that gave him a free hand in Rumania. Except in such rare instances, Stalin pushed for the greatest advantage possible by whatever means were available.

The most usual procedure, characteristic especially of the Eastern European states, was the establishment of coalition governments that gave the appearance of

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freedom and autonomy. The Communist party, better organized than its opponents, led by experienced men who had been trained in the USSR for many years, would gain control of the ministries that controlled the police and the other security forces and imprison, terrorize, and murder their opponents until the time was ripe to tear away the veil and reveal a monolithic totalitarian state subservient to the Soviet Union. Similar techniques seem to be equally effective in the world today.

Western leaders, on the other hand, were confused, disunited, uncertain of their own goals and of their relations with one another, often ignorant of Russian and Communist history, and ill-informed about Stalin and his regime. They vacillated between attempts to win his good will and bouts of disappointment, suspicion, fear, and anger, when his words and actions confounded their hopes. The Western powers arrived at most of their decisions toward the end of the war on the basis of purely military considerations, in the hope of ending the fighting as soon as possible and sometimes with an eye toward avoiding conflict with the Soviets.

This explains why Eisenhower did not march eastward to Berlin when he could easily have done so, just as Patton could have marched into Prague but was held back. The Western powers also aided Communist partisans rather than their anti-Communist countrymen in Yugoslavia chiefly because Tito's forces were judged more effective fighters. For quite different reasons, the Soviets moved forward to occupy whatever territory they could reach and never overlooked political goals. Thus they murdered a good part of the Polish officer corps in the Katyn forest and deliberately allowed the Germans to slaughter the insurgent Polish Home Army in Warsaw, preventing the Western nations from sending help. The notion that American behavior was the cause of objectionable Russian actions in 1945 and 1946 will not survive an honest reading of Thomas's valuable narrative.

EVEN the most casual reflection on the story Thomas tells will suggest that if any major developments in history can be called inevitable, the postwar conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States is one of them. The USSR's modern history is a story of constant pressure against its neighbors and, when possible, expansion into their territory. One major goal of the czars and their Communist successors has been to control Poland and eastern Germany in order to defend the western approaches to their country and serve as a springboard for further advances of their own. Another has been to gain hegemony over the Balkans, a project especially dear to the Pan-Slavists of the 19th century. When the combative and apocalyptic Communist ideology is added to that historical tradition, the result is not likely to be a peaceful accommodation—unless other nations are willing to yield the entire Eurasian land mass to Soviet domination in one form or another.

The Americans had hopes of reaching a friendly settlement with Stalin, working out remaining disagreements through the newly formed United Nations, withdrawing and demobilizing their forces, and turning their attention to other things. They could not do so. World War II had started over the invasion of Poland. The Allies could hardly abandon that tragic nation to Stalin without protest, but any truly independent Poland would seem an intolerable threat to the Soviet Union. Promises of free elections made at Yalta were bound to be broken, and their breach would surely and, as Thomas's account shows, rightly be taken as signs of Soviet bad faith and unacceptable ambitions.

For similar reasons conflict was inevitable, too, over Germany and over Western Europe, where Communist parties under the influence or control of Stalin disrupted attempts to return to normal conditions. No American government could long stand aside. The only questions were when Western leaders would recognize reality and how ably they would deal with it.

By 1946, Stalin's actions in viola-

tion of written agreements, an unpleasant shift in the tone of his and his associates' public statements, revelations of widespread Soviet espionage against the United States and Canada, and the complete failure of Western protests to have any effect, finally brought a greater degree of clarity to American understanding and with it a determination in American leaders to resist. *Armed Truce* breaks off at that point. Hugh Thomas's further volumes promise the story of how the struggle developed. We may hope for improvements in them along the lines I have suggested here. However that may be, if they are as informative as this one they will be well worth reading.

Starvation as Policy

THE HARVEST OF SORROW: SOVIET COLLECTIVIZATION AND THE TERROR-FAMINE. By ROBERT CONQUEST. Oxford. 384 pp. \$19.95.

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

The Harvest of Sorrow qualifies as a monumental contribution toward an understanding of the modern totalitarian state. Its subject is one of the most shameful chapters in Soviet history: Stalin's war against the peasants. Altogether, upward of fifteen million people died as a result of the forced collectivization campaign instituted during the early 1930's. Yet this tragic episode has remained obscured in a thick fog of official Soviet lies and the indifference of the West. Even among those who abhor his brutal rule, Stalin is much more likely to be remembered as the man who terrorized his fellow Communists than as the "killer of peasants," a description which was to seal the doom of the poet who wrote these words, Osip Mandelstam. *The Harvest of Sorrow* ranks as a significant achievement simply by presenting a thoroughly researched account of this neglected story.

ARCH PUDDINGTON, whose article "Pol Pot in Retrospect" appeared in our April issue, works for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in New York.

What further elevates the study is the illumination it casts on Communism's irreconcilable hostility to the independent farmer. While Stalin willingly assumed the role of executioner in the drive to destroy the traditional Russian village, it was the early Bolsheviks' profound loathing for the peasant way of life which paved the way for the use of starvation as the ultimate expression of Soviet power. The Communists detested the peasants for two reasons. First, the peasants were perceived as the major cause of Russian backwardness. As Maxim Gorky complained, "the fundamental obstacle in the way of Russian progress" was the "deadweight of illiterate village life." The second and more important reason was the peasant's attachment to private property. Thus, to Lenin, the peasant was "fiercely and meanly individualistic," and therefore an impediment to socialism.

By the end of the 1920's, more than a decade after the Bolsheviks seized power, it was clear to all that collectivization could never be accomplished through a voluntary approach. Peasant resistance to the encroachment of state power over the countryside had repeatedly stymied the authorities, and the peasants themselves, far from directing their anger at the kulaks, or wealthy peasants, were demonstrating an impressive degree of class solidarity. Nor would half-measures work; given the slightest opportunity, the peasants would abandon collective farms for a plot of land they could call their own.

The first stage of forced collectivization was proclaimed on December 27, 1929, when Stalin announced the policy of the "liquidation of the kulak as a class." The campaign was justified on traditional Marxist lines: the kulaks were depicted as the bourgeoisie of the village, exploiting the middle and poor peasants and systematically sabotaging the reforms proposed by the Revolution. In fact, however, the very concept of the kulak was one of Stalin's greatest myths. The "wealthy" peasant owned perhaps two or three cows, employed several workers, har-

vested ten hectares of land, and earned only about 50 percent more than the poorest peasant. In addition, the kulak was far and away the most productive farmer in his village, and was probably regarded as a leader by his neighbors rather than an exploiter.

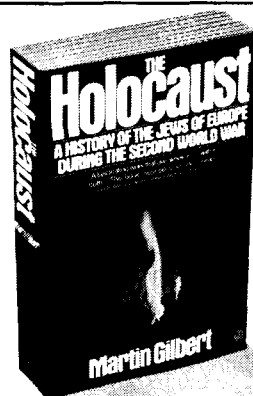
Nonetheless, Stalin's selection of the kulak as a scapegoat proved a master stroke. By defining the kulak as the class enemy, he was able to convince gullible foreigners that the strength of the state was being exerted against selfish landowners and not honest tillers of the soil. In practice, however, the kulak label could be attached to just about anyone. A middle or poor peasant could be condemned for harboring kulak attitudes if he attended church regularly or, more to the point, actively opposed collectivization.

Dekulakization also breathed new life into the Communist party, which, after the rout of the bourgeoisie and the various counter-

revolutionary armies, was desperate for new enemies. From top to bottom, Left, Right, and Center, the party greeted collectivization with approval and often with genuine enthusiasm. Thousands of young party members from the cities volunteered for the dekulakization campaign, setting about their task with a sense of mission seldom witnessed in time of peace. Typical of the exhortations delivered to the departing cadres was the following:

You must assume your duty with a sense of the strictest party responsibility, without whimpering, without any rotten liberalism. Throw your bourgeois humanitarianism out the window and act like Bolsheviks worthy of Comrade Stalin. Beat down the kulak agent wherever he raises his head. It's war—it's them or us! The last decayed remnant of capitalist farming must be wiped out at any cost!

The usual punishment was depor-



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tation to the more inhospitable regions of the Soviet North. Perhaps ten million members of kulak families were exiled to various labor camps, where most perished. Children were victimized along with their parents, both in the villages and later in the camps. School authorities were officially encouraged to persecute kulak children in order to persuade the parents to take a more cooperative attitude. One weakening official was upbraided: "Don't think of the kulak's hungry children; in the class struggle philanthropy is evil."

FROM Stalin's point of view, dekulakization was eminently successful: within several years, the transformation of Soviet agriculture from private to state ownership, a challenge which had eluded Lenin himself, had essentially been completed. The peasants' natural leaders had been deported or killed, and the rest frightened into obedience. Nevertheless, Stalin remained unsatisfied; the peasants, he reasoned, had yet to accept fully the new realities of agricultural life. Although herded into collective entities, the peasants were not without resources for future struggles against the state. Thus Stalin unleashed the final weapon: the terror-famine.

The ostensible reason for the drastic measures instituted in 1932 was the state's difficulty in procuring grain. The possibility of a grain shortfall was real enough. Agriculture had been severely disrupted by forced collectivization. Peasants who a few years earlier had worked as independent farmers were organized like industrial workers, paid starvation wages, and discouraged by exorbitant taxation from cultivating the small private plots permitted them by the authorities. Given this state of affairs, there was reason to predict that the peasants would produce only enough for personal consumption.

The party, fresh from its victory over the kulaks, was now mobilized to collect grain. Watchtowers were erected overlooking the fields, where armed guards were stationed with orders to shoot anyone trying

to steal food. The Ukrainian press published numerous accounts of trials of peasants who had been charged with stealing food. Some were shot; most—like the woman apprehended for stealing ten onions—received lengthy prison-camp terms. To ensure that grain was not being "hoarded," brigades of party activists made house-to-house hunts in search of concealed food, food which, for the peasant family involved, often meant the difference between life and death. The searches were repeated every few weeks, and peasants who did not exhibit the traditional signs of extreme malnutrition could expect intense scrutiny when party delegations arrived.

Although the terror-famine affected several regions of the Soviet Union, the peasantry of the Ukraine suffered the cruelest fate. According to Conquest, an astonishing five million Ukrainian peasants died of starvation in 1932-33, nearly 20 percent of the Ukraine's population. Conquest believes the Ukraine was singled out by Stalin because of a perceived threat that stemmed from the Ukrainian people's historic nationalistic and anti-Russian sentiments, feelings which were encouraged by some of the Republic's party officials. Thus, not only was the peasant's attachment to the land to be broken, but the Ukrainian peasant's sense of national identity was to be destroyed in the process. This was achieved by deliberate starvation: the Ukrainian countryside was stripped of food, and measures were taken to prevent the doomed peasants from reaching areas of more abundance. The Ukraine's borders were sealed; Ukrainian peasants were physically turned away from Russian villages where bread was available. Mounds of grain were stored a few miles from famine-stricken villages. Although sometimes, through neglect, the grain spoiled, it was never distributed to the famine victims.

IN ADDITION to the human tragedy, the terror-famine had a transforming effect on Soviet political culture. The use of starvation as a conscious instrument of state power led, in Bukharin's words, to

the "dehumanization" of the party, for whose members "terror was henceforth a normal method of administration, and obedience to any order from above a high virtue."

The Soviet political system, whose totalitarian features were already quite visible, was further corrupted by the necessity of denying the existence of famine, both to the Soviet people and to the outside world. Astonishingly well-organized Potemkin villages were created to convince visiting foreign dignitaries that the Ukrainian people were well fed. The word "famine" was effectively stricken from the language; those unwise enough to raise the subject risked a lengthy term in a labor camp.

More lies had to be fabricated to account for the disastrous condition of Soviet agriculture. Front and center among the scapegoats were, of course, the peasants, but many others were implicated as well. Veterinarians were purged because of the high rate of livestock mortality; meteorologists were punished on the grounds of having falsified weather predictions; agronomists were charged with sabotaging tractors and causing weed infestation. Meanwhile, to avoid embarrassing admissions about the declining harvest, a fraudulent method was concocted to count the grain: the so-called biological yield, that is, the amount of grain standing in the field, not the amount harvested.

The Harvest of Sorrow reinforces Robert Conquest's reputation as the preeminent historian of the formation of the Stalinist system. Two earlier books, *The Great Terror* and *Kolyma*, dealt with Stalin's purge of the Communist party and the Arctic death camps which swallowed up thousands upon thousands of political prisoners. *The Harvest of Sorrow* is certainly the equal of these earlier works, and quite possibly the most important. Collectivization—with its arrant disregard for human life, elaborate structure of deceit and secrecy, and quasi-genocidal campaigns against certain nationalities—established a gruesome pattern of official behavior which was to

prevail for decades to come. Nor have the repercussions been restricted to the Soviet Union: in formulating their deadly policies of socialized agriculture, the Khmer Rouge and the Communist regime in Ethiopia clearly derived their inspiration from the model of Soviet collectivization. By shedding invaluable light on the Soviet experience, *Conquest* by implication and extension tells us about more than the Soviet example itself.

Washington vs. Havana

THE CLOSEST OF ENEMIES: A PERSONAL AND DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF THE CASTRO YEARS. By WAYNE S. SMITH. Norton. 308 pp. \$19.95.

Reviewed by MARK FALCOFF

OVER the past three or four years Wayne Smith has become one of the most visible and active critics of the Reagan administration's policy in Latin America. His notoriety began in 1982, when, having recently retired from the diplomatic service, he wrote an article accusing the U.S. government of willfully turning aside repeated Cuban overtures to negotiate our differences; this was an allegation which, in the overheated environment surrounding the conflict in El Salvador, was bound to be front-page news. Since then Smith has made frequent appearances on television, in the op-ed sections of the prestige press, and from the forum he now enjoys as head of the Cuban studies program at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington. The ongoing debate over Nicaragua has given continuing relevance to his views.

In many ways Smith is uniquely equipped to discuss these matters. He holds a Ph.D. from Columbia; he has written extensively on Argentina, where he served as political counselor of the U.S. embassy during the early 1970's; and he has served in the Soviet Union as well

as in Cuba. His first post in the diplomatic service was, in fact, Havana, as third secretary of the U.S. embassy in the last days of the dictator Fulgencio Batista and up to the break in relations with Castro in 1961; in the mid-1970's he was director of Cuban affairs in the State Department; his final assignment before retirement was *in situ* as chief of the U.S. "interests section" in the Cuban capital, housed in a large building which was formerly our embassy there.

The Closest of Enemies purports to be a history of those years—from the particular vantage point of a privileged witness and participant but also from that of an interested academic reviewing the record. Actually, it is a more deeply personal book than this would suggest—something of a spiritual autobiography, revealing its author from a number of different angles as a man of wit, charm, and considerable intellectual force, but also as peevish, vain, embittered, and

strangely alienated from his own country, its interests, and its deepest values.

It is difficult to summarize the argument of *The Closest of Enemies* without seeming to indulge in grotesque caricature. But it is no exaggeration to epitomize Smith's views thus: everything that has happened in U.S.-Cuban relations since at least 1957—and I do mean *everything*—is the fault of successive American administrations, including very specifically the Carter administration. The few things that the Cubans have done wrong, or might seem to have done wrong, are our fault, too. Smith attributes to the United States not merely the tragic course of Cuban-American relations, but the turn of events within Cuba itself, including the human-rights situation there. By clever innuendo he strongly insinuates that Washington was responsible for Cuban intervention in Ethiopia and Angola, and even for

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MARK FALCOFF is a visiting fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Cuba's UN vote in favor of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan!

There are two ways to deal with a book of this sort, and I shall try, briefly, to do both. The first is to focus on the author's general approach to his subject; the second is to focus on the factual treatment of specific issues. With regard to the general approach, the reader immediately notes a curious asymmetry in Smith's treatment of the U.S.

"THERE BEING NO National Association for the Protection of White Males, white males will bear the brunt of discrimination, with the Court's blessing. Social justice will be reserved for those with tribal affiliations and accredited victim status, proving once more that under the liberal regime, you have to have a lot of clout to be a victim. Being an individual isn't enough."

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and Cuban governments. As an insider in various administrations, Smith was privy to all of the confusion, bureaucratic infighting, and indecision which are characteristic of the foreign policies of democratic countries. Smith bores in mercilessly on any ambiguities in U.S. policy, for these presumably justify Cuban reticence, suspicion, or hostility. By contrast, Cuba itself, a totalitarian dictatorship viewed from the outside, always seems to reflect a more coherent view.

Another, more serious asymmetry lies in Smith's comparison of U.S. actions with Cuban *expressed intentions*. Thus, when the U.S. does something of which Smith disapproves, this justifies in his eyes the most luxuriant Cuban suspicions of us, and it is time for a vigorous round of self-flagellation. When, however, Cuban *actions* cast an unfavorable light on Castro's good faith, that also is the fault of the United States, which in some way has driven him to do what he did; and therefore it is time, once again, for more self-flagellation. After a while, any but the most determinedly masochistic reader must begin to rebel.

The real problem, however, has to do with Smith's notion of the acceptable threshold for U.S. Cuban policy. His view, stated simply, is that Cuba is bound to do all of the things it does at home and abroad, in conjunction with or apart from the Soviet Union, and that the U.S. has no legitimate right to regard these as an obstacle to normalization of relations. If we do, we are the ones to blame for the estrangement. Moreover, relations are a positive good in and of themselves, since they are "likely to accomplish relatively more . . . than pushing . . . to confrontation, and more by reducing tension than increasing it."

This is surely the view of the Cuban government itself—and why not? The normalization of relations would satisfy Castro's ambitions to play a great-power role, it would result in a lifting of the trade embargo and other inconveniences, and it would help reduce the United States to a post-imperial power. But one ends the book still wondering why this

should be the view of serious people in the United States or of any of our Foreign Service officers, active or retired—unless, of course, the sole and unique purpose of foreign policy is to maintain good relations with all governments no matter what they do, or with whom.

BUT the problem with this book is not merely philosophical but factual. For one thing, it is full of what Argentines like to call "interesting omissions." For example, there is nothing here at all about Castro's role in the unification of guerrilla forces in El Salvador, or armed assistance to the Sandinistas in the final days of the civil war in Nicaragua. The discussion of Maurice Bishop's Grenada is written as if the thousands of devastatingly revealing documents uncovered by the invasion force had never been published. There is a mean-spirited reference to the bruising Senate debate over aid to the new Nicaraguan government in 1980, but no information whatsoever concerning the amount of the aid (over \$100 million), much less concerning the way the Sandinistas proved oblivious to such blandishments. There is no mention of the visit of Assistant Secretary Thomas Enders to Managua in 1982 and of the refusal of the Sandinistas to discuss seriously his proposals for coexistence.

For another thing, much of what Smith claims to know of the inner history of U.S.-Cuban relations is only superficially authoritative. He was not present—though, arguably, he should have been—at the meeting between Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez and Secretary of State Alexander Haig in Mexico City in 1981, or at a subsequent meeting between Ambassador Vernon Walters and Castro, and he seems to know of those events only what his Cuban colleagues have told him.

For still another thing, this book is rather disingenuous in its treatment of chronology, particularly in the chapters dealing with Cuban policy in Africa. Though President Carter was seriously interested in normalizing relations with Cuba, early in his administration he made it clear in various statements, both public and private, that any expan-

sion of Castro's military activity overseas anywhere in the world would undermine the process. When the Cuban dictator decided that his priorities lay elsewhere, the détente came to an end. Smith acts as if the Carter people—or rather, Carter's National Security Council—somehow broke faith with their Cuban counterparts, as if there were nothing strange at all in Castro's shipping an army halfway around the world to fight under a Soviet general.

Let us see how Smith operates in the particular case of Angola. At the time of the Portuguese revolution of 1974 there were three factions fighting for independence in Angola: Holden Roberto's FNLA, broadly speaking pro-Western; Jonas Savimbi's UNITA, then funded by the People's Republic of China; and the MPLA, supported by the Soviets. According to Smith, the so-called Alvor agreement, concluded among the three groups in Portugal in January 1975,

offered the best hope that Angola's transition from colony to nation might be accomplished without a civil war and without major outside foreign intervention. . . . Incredibly, the Ford administration . . . did not even wait a decent interval to see if the agreement might work; only days after the Alvor agreement had been signed, the NSC's 40 Committee (which oversees clandestine CIA operations), authorized some \$300,000 in covert aid to Holden Roberto. Nor had the U.S. encouraged Roberto to act because of some aggressive move by the MPLA. Quite the contrary . . . both the MPLA and the UNITA had given evidence of intending to honor the Alvor agreement.

Thus, Smith concludes, "The U.S., far from seeking peaceful solutions, had been instrumental in starting the final round of the fighting."

What is missing here? The following facts: that the approval of \$300,000 for the FNLA came on

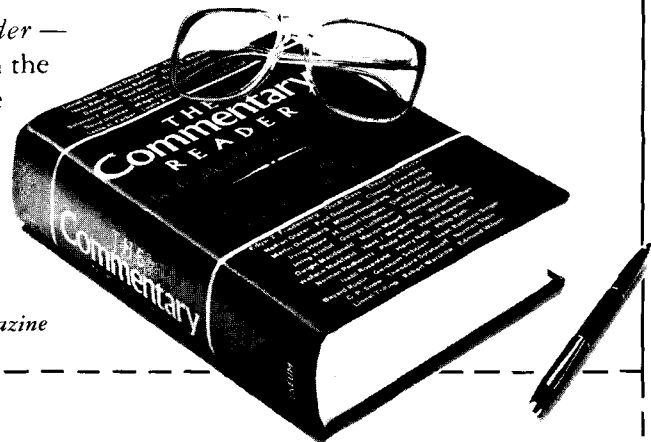
January 26, 1975. Its purpose was to make the FNLA competitive in the transitional government; that is, it was intended for political as opposed to military purposes. On February 14, scarcely two weeks later—and surely before the money from the U.S. could be disbursed, much less become evident on the ground—a military delegation from Cuba arrived from the Congo; on March 11-15, Soviet weapons were delivered to the MPLA, causing protests from the presidents of Nigeria, Tanzania, Egypt, and the Sudan, and during the rest of the month Cuban and Soviet military advisers arrived to assist their allies. On July 16, 1975—*four months later*—President Ford approved a \$6 million fund for covert military action in Angola. A similar critique could be made of Smith's discussion of Cuban and Soviet intervention in Ethiopia.

THE most outrageous part of the book, however, deals with refugee

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policy. "The Reagan administration," Smith writes, "brought about the release of not a single political prisoner; it refused to divide united families by providing immigrant visas to the spouses and children of Cubans already legally resident in the U.S.; and worst of all, it turned its back on former political prisoners."

Thus the President and his associates are seen not merely as intransigent ideologues but as hypocrites. Again, what is missing here? Smith does not explain that Castro does not like to release people to President Reagan, whom he has likened more than once to Adolf Hitler; he prefers to use intermediaries like Jacques Cousteau, President Mitterrand, or Senator Edward Kennedy (who, to their credit, have actively involved themselves in this issue). Thus it is not surprising that the prisoner issue has not been an area of stunning success in recent years.

Even so, however, it is flatly untrue that not a single political prisoner has been released through negotiations with the Reagan administration. Here is one anecdote out of many which will illustrate the context in which these things take place. In June 1984 Reverend Jesse Jackson was about to visit Cuba and Nicaragua, and one of his associates, Cleveland attorney Edward Coaxum, visited the Cuban Affairs Office of the State Department in-

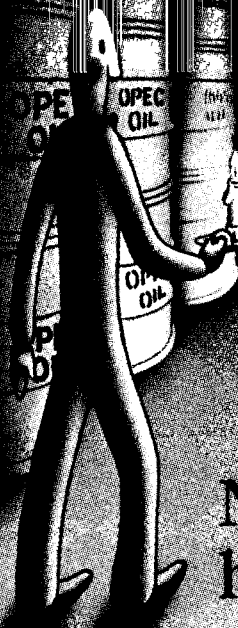
quiring if there were humanitarian issues of interest to the U.S. which Jackson might raise with Castro. Grateful for the offer, the Department suggested that Reverend Jackson raise the issue of the *plantados*—the longest held (over twenty years) and most intransigent political prisoners—and, also, the question of taking back the undesirables who had flowed into the United States through the port of Mariel in 1980.

At first Castro released only 25 Americans he was holding—mainly persons accused of drug-running and other nonpolitical crimes. When the Department persisted in calling for the release of political prisoners, at the last minute Castro agreed to release 26 of them, provided that the U.S. agreed to take them the following day, and that they travel in a Cubana Airlines plane, which would land at Dulles Airport. Castro knew, of course, that this contravened just about every U.S. regulation on the books, and wagered that the Reagan administration would not rise to the bait. In fact, after a lengthy debate it agreed to all of Castro's conditions.

Just as a matter of record, the United States urged Cuba to release all of its longer-term political prisoners at the time the Mariel agreements were signed on December 14, 1984. The United States agreed to put the *plantados* at the

very top of the list of refugees to be processed as soon as Castro released them. In December 1986 the interests section in Havana interviewed 61 additional political prisoners, plus 20 in the so-called "Cousteau group" (long-term political prisoners released by Castro earlier in 1986). In January 1987 Castro permitted them to leave Cuba, two at a time; none of the others on the list of 61 has yet been permitted to depart. It is difficult to imagine why Wayne Smith—who of all people is in a position to know these things—acts as if they never took place.

THERE is within American culture a deep need to believe that all international problems are the result of misunderstandings which can easily be cleared up once we change *our* point of view ("We are the most hated nation in the world, and justifiably so," a woman from Indiana wrote Senator Richard Lugar during a recent hijacking by terrorists of a TWA airliner). Thus a book like *The Closest of Enemies* is bound to have a certain resonance. But since so many of Wayne Smith's former colleagues are still on active service or recently retired, one would hope that his propositions will be subjected to more than normal critical scrutiny. In that way he might yet make, in spite of himself, a useful contribution to the Cuba debate.



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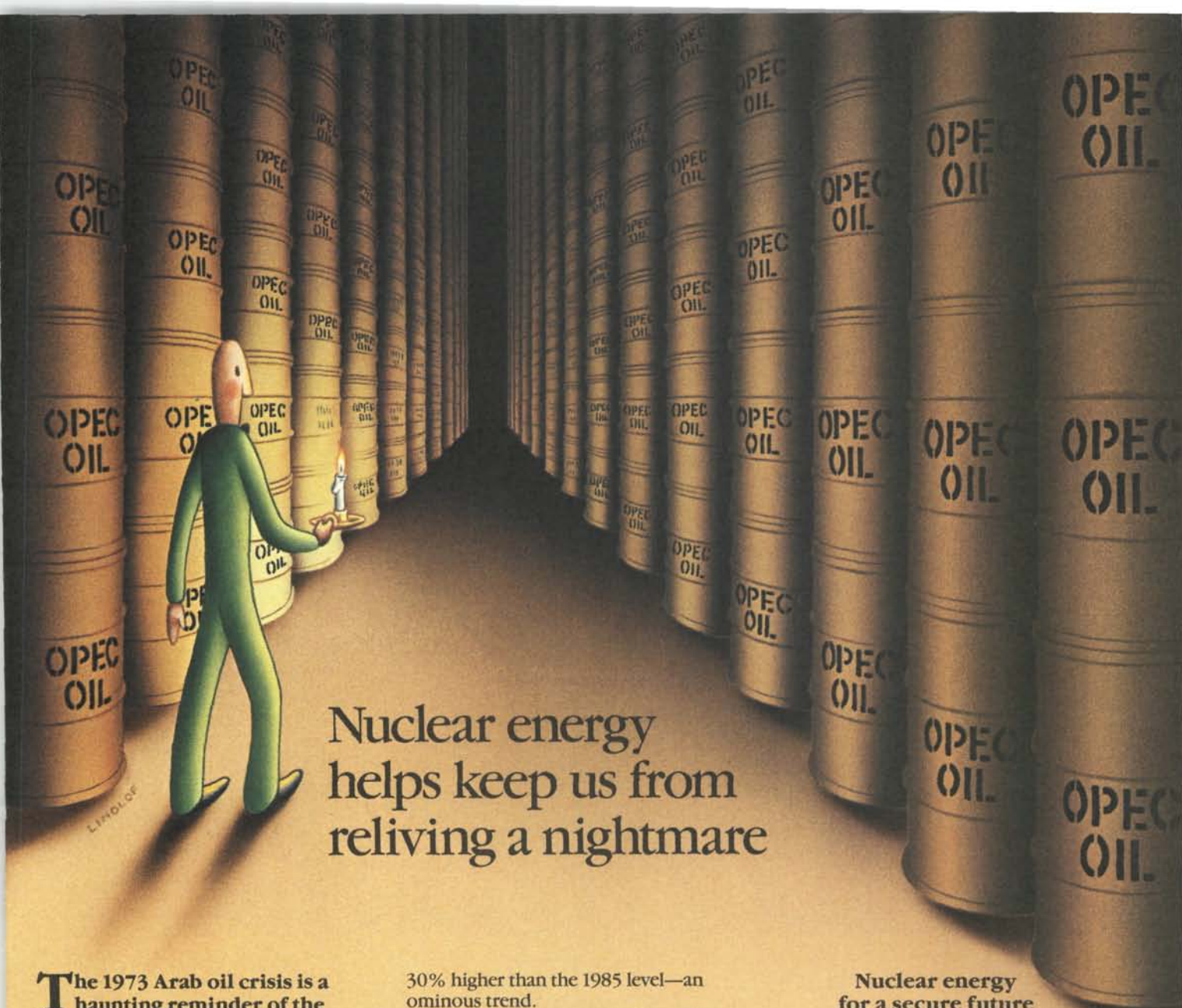
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